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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

SANKARA Ramanuja and Madhwa are the three Great Acharyas whose teachings hold sway over the bulk of the Hindus all over India. They are equally appreciated by the best thinkers of the day even among the Oriental Scholars of Europe and America. An attempt is made in the following pages to bring under one cover critical sketches of their life and times together with an exposition of their respective systems of philosophy. It is hoped that this comprehensive edition will be welcomed by the public.

LIFE AND TIMES OF SANKARA

BY

MR. C. N. KRISHNASWAMI AIYER, M.A.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND THEIR VALUE

AS far as it is known," says a recent American writer in speaking of the great Atheistic Sage, "the life of Socrates, in its entirety, may be told in a paragraph." Such, it is to be feared, is also the case with Sankara, whose life is here purposed to sketch. Few of the facts of his life can be ascertained with certainty, not even the time and the place of his birth.

Yet the need for a reliable and historic account of Sankara is being felt more and more: for the Advaita Philosophy, of which he was the foremost exponent and which has since his time enjoyed a wide and more or less steady popularity throughout India, has latterly had additional importance given to it by the Vedantic studies of Western scholars, European and American, and by the spread of Theosophic thought. The comparative method is being applied to it and its merit is being thus tested. Christian and other hostile sects seek to expose what they believe to be its shortcomings. This intelligent study of Sankara's works has naturally aroused a desire to ascertain the facts of the 'external'

life of the Teacher. As yet however but few really historic memoirs exist of the life and times of Sankara written in a true historic spirit and with the object of showing him just as he was. The aim of the present sketch is accordingly to gather together for the benefit of the general reader what is to be found in the *Sankaravijayas* or 'Triumphs of Sankara' which have come down to us and in the monographs and stray items of information available in the recent writings of modern enquirers.

These 'original authorities' are—(1) the *Sankaravijayas* of Madhavacharya Anandagiri Chidvilasa and Swami Sadashanda arranged perhaps in chronological order here (2) a chapter which is to be found in the ninth *Amsa* of *Skanda Purana* and (3) *Madhaviyaya* and *Manimanyari* both by Pandit Narayanaacharya a hostile Madhva writer. And to recent writers Wilson Max Muller and Telang may be mentioned as the most important. A few words regarding the relative merits of these several sources are needed to prevent misconceptions and explain the attitude of the present writer towards them.

— Madhavacharya whose work is placed first in the list is the well known Vidyaranya who was minister of Hukka and Bokka Kings of Vijayanagar and became later on the chief of the Sringeri Mutt. This fact settles the time when this *Sankaravijaya* was written whether Vidyaranaya wrote it himself or caused it to be written by some one else for considered as a literary effort it is to be feared that matter and manner taken together the work does not reflect much credit on the critical capacity and historic judgment of the author. It is quite clear from internal evidence that it was meant to be a counterblast to the Madhva writings above mentioned. Of the other *Sankaravijayas* it need

only be said that they all show traces of relatively later origin though Wilson claims for Anandagiri age as well as trustworthiness. This however, Telang has shown to be groundless and untenable. The chapter of *Skandapurana* has been mentioned only to show that it is a very recent and poor interpolation and has even less historic value. *Malhavyaga* and *Manimanyari* are on the other hand owing to their nature very interesting for historic purposes. In his sketch of the life of Madhva the writer of this account has endeavoured to show that these works were the fruit of the persecution which that teacher of dualistic Vedanta had received from the then incumbents of the Sringeri Mutt and that he had on that account been forced to call himself Bhima and make Sankara one of whose encores at the Sringeri Mutt accidentally bearing the same name (as has been shown elsewhere) had been troubling him an avatar of a Rishabh Maniman b name mentioned in the Mahabharata. Pandit Narayana one of the followers of Madhva in the next generation put these hints together along with some traditions current in Malabar about Sankara and thus composed these two works of his with intent to discredit Sankara's origin and his doctrines.

2 HINDUISM BEFORE SANKARA BUDDHISM

The life of Sankara like that of every other great man has to begin with the description of the state of things in the midst of which he was born and brought up for each man poet or philosopher inhales much before he exhales. Accordingly we have to consider the state of Hinduism at the time of the advent of this great Guru and pass in rapid review the stages it had gone through before reaching that particular state.

It is enough however to start with the period whenever it was when Vedic sacrifices constituted mainly the creed of Hinduism. In the

words of the poet kings (in those days) had milked the earth for sacrifices and Indra in return the heavens to help harvests and There was the sacrifice of the horse there was the sacrifice of the goat and of all things imaginable And sacrifices had increased not merely in number but also in elaboration of ritual Extravagant rewards had been promised by the promoters which however could not be realised in practice and the unconvincing explanations invented to explain these failures away merely served to hasten the fall of the system Under such circumstances therefore the desire for inner religious improvement was slowly growing and making itself manifest The opponents of animal sacrifices were to be found not merely among the Kshatriyas but the more thoughtful among the Brahmins had also begun to sing the praises of divine contemplation and practical moral virtues as against the extravagances of sacrifices The *Upanishads* or the top knots of the *Vedas* as they are sometimes termed are almost everywhere of this line of thought and one glorious hymn chanted to this day by the orthodox *Smārtha* Brahmin before breaking his fast discovers in beautiful terms the meaning of the whole movement It is known as *Atmayagna* (Sacrifice of the Self) and is well worthy of translation but it being rather long this sample will suffice for our present purpose — And of the sacrifice performed by the master who has understood these truths the soul is the performer the heart the seat of the sacrificial fire sensual desires the ghee nger the sacrificial lamb contemplation fire *the period of sacrifice as long as life lasts* whatever is eaten is sacrificial rice whatever is drunk is the soma drink and death is the sacred bath concluding the ceremony!

This spirit fostered by men of thought and encouraged by men of action over a long period at last practically manifested itself in the teaching of Gautama the Buddha. Most Hindus have learned to regard this teacher as an *avatar* of Vishnu though strongly enough he is said to have come down not to establish religion and law by protecting the good and punishing the wicked which is the mission of all the other *avatars* of Vishnu but to delude some pious devotees of Siva as well as of Vishnu { Many others who have learned to look upon him with better and more rational feelings yet seem to regard him as an alien and his faith as absolutely alien to India. This it need hardly be pointed out is a gross misreading of history. The teaching of Gautama a member of a Rajput clan was but a developed form of the thoughts and theories found in the *Upanishads* with the freshness and vigour of his own personality and zeal added to them. The rapid spread of Buddhism among all classes is proof that he had set to music just the tone which had been haunting millions of ears. Long after his departure and after his inclusion in the Hindu Pantheon Buddha's real service to mankind is described by Jayadeva in one of his popular songs to have been the propagation of 'the spirit of mercy and the abolition of animal sacrifices. For sings he O Thou of merciful heart' Thou didst condemn the slaughter of lambs at sacrifices though enjoined by *Smritis* when Thou didst take the shape of Buddha. His crusade against the killing of animals and his battles so earnestly fought in favour of righteousness and renunciation his use of the vernaculars in religious teaching instead of Sanskrit and his organisation of bands of monks and nuns of all castes to spread his faith—all these points explain the electric speed

with which Buddhism spread in his days as well as in the succeeding times not merely over all parts of India but over vaster regions in East and West

Starting under such favorable conditions however this religion like every other institution ever started by human agency silently went on changing from century to century and during its later life became corrupt in many ways Gross idolatry in practice (cf Hsuen Tsang) formal atheism in doctrine a regular army of monks and nuns every where eating up the substance of the industrious and charged with the worst evils of decayed monasticism were only a few of its bad features Its enemies the Brahmins at length felt that the time had come for them to use the logic and rhetoric of Buddhists against themselves—and they began to do it effectively

REVIVED HINDUISM ITS DEFECTS

Among these neo Hindu missionaries Komarila Bhatta—is evidently the most renowned Tradition connects him with a fierce and relentless conflict against the Buddhists of which more will be said later on Here it is enough to note that his peculiar faith was in what is known as *Karmamarga* that is salvation by the sole means of the faithful performance of *Karmas* or the daily and other periodical ceremonial rites enjoined by the *Vedas* and the *Smritis* His success whatever it was was due not certainly to the advocacy of animal sacrifice whose day had most assuredly fled and to which mere lip service was all that anybody would render but to the revival of the harmless rites made more impressive and more authoritative through his successfully meeting the arguments of the Buddhists against the Vedic religion and in favour of their own faith

Bhattas was only one of the many sects that had been formed at various times in the latter progress of Hinduism. There were *Bhaktas*, *Saktas*, *Ganapatyas** with many subdivisions among each and the name of these sects was really legion. They had all based their faiths, however, on the Vedas particular texts or passages torn from the context and specially interpreted formed their scripture and several of them had begun to claim greater authority for the *Puranas* or the *Smritis* on which they had based their belief than even that which belonged to the Vedas. And what was of infinitely greater importance the practices of some of these religious sects were abominable or terrible. And every sect was intolerant of every other. The long and ceaseless wranglings of these sects and their occasional mutual persecutions and other hardships thereby caused had at length resulted in a general sense of weariness which seemed to have come over men and an earnest hankering after some kind of harmonising principles and general religious peace. Union and friendliness were possible only when a common basis could be so fashioned as to be comprehensive and able to allow for large differences of secondary importance philosophically as well as practically. This then was assuredly the kind of unifying influence that was urgently needed. It was given to Sankara to supply this need in the most wonderful manner possible and with the most solid success and make *Vedanta* the basis of every religious sect that India has known so as to satisfy the needs of men of all shades of intelligence and bias.

* Sankara Vajaya

CHAPTER II

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

THE TIME AND PLACE OF HIS BIRTH

An obscure village named Kaladi, six miles to the east of Alvor now a station on the Cochin Shoranur Railway line is traditionally mentioned as the birthplace of Sankara. It is not undisputed for Anandagiri mentions that place as Chidambaram. He is however alone in this statement. Further the writer of *Manumanjari* gives it as Kaladi and his testimony in such matters must be held peculiarly valuable for very obvious reasons. Again *Parurpanai Nnam* one of the Nambudri families in the neighbourhood of Trichur has been in all Malabar understood to be the family to which the mother of Sankara belonged and her cremation ground thereabout is still shown to the enquirer as a place of interest. There is likewise a curious practice connected with the temple of Narayana at Badarikasrama on the Himalayas. The officiating priest there has been a Nambudri from Malabar for a long period and the memory of no man goes back to a period when he was otherwise. And as tradition assigns the founding of this temple to Sankara the presence of the Nambudri there can easily be explained by his kinship to the founder. We have therefore every reason to believe that Sankara belonged to Malabar and to the Nambudri class of Brahmans.

The *Agrahara* of Kaladi is said to have been founded by a neighbouring chief who was called Rajasekhara if that be indeed a proper name. This chief dreamed as thousands of other men have done that Siva had become manifest in the neighborhood of his capital in a spontaneously risen *Linga*. And he accordingly caused a temple to be built for the God and founded an *Agrahara* or settlement of Brahmins for the service of the temple. Among these was one of the name of Vidyadhira which is evidently a title indicating his learning. He had an only son of the name of Sivaguru. They went through the usual course of instruction open in those days to Brahmin boys and having completed his studies he married at the proper age and settled down as a householder. For a long time he was childless and both husband and wife prayed to Siva to bless them with a son. At length in consequence as the *Sankaravaya* poets tell of a plan agreed upon at Kailas between Siva and the Gods who had called there to learn how He was going to revive Hinduism the God was pleased to bless the wife Sivaguru and she became the mother of Sankara.

It would be a marvel if in the case of such a great Goro like Sankara as in so many other cases later generations had found nothing extraordinary about his birth. Accordingly in addition to the divine blessing noted just now we have several other versions to consider in regard to the circumstances of the Goro's birth and parentage. Madhava adds that before blessing Sivaguru's wife the God asked her in a vision while she was asleep whether she would have a number of dunces and ruffians for children or an only wise son who was destined to be short lived. She wisely chose the latter alternative and had Sankara for her son.

Anandagiri however relates the story in an entirely different manner. We have seen that he mentions the place of Sankara's nativity as Chidambaram. We are told that there was a pious Brahmin living with his wife at this place and that at one time the husband retired to a neighbouring forest after renouncing the world that the wife continued for a long time to serve the Lord of Chidambaram and that as a reward of her devotion the Lord was pleased to make her conceive in some mysterious and miraculous manner. And the child thus born to her was Sankara.

There is again another version of the story of Sankara's birth which we have to examine before we pass on. The writer of *Manimayari* states that a Brahmin widow of Kaladi went astray from the ascetic life imposed upon her and begot a male child and that this child was Sankara. This plain statement however is based on a tradition still current in some parts of Malabar that a young widow of Kaladi once went to the temple of Siva along with other girls of her own age and that as some among them prayed for children she also did so that the Lord granted her request and that she bore Sankara in consequence. The difficulties which Sankara is said to have experienced later on in conducting the funeral rites of his mother would also seem to confirm the suspicions about the illegitimacy of his birth though the objections of his relatives were merely against a *Sanyasin* attempting to violate the rules of his order by undertaking to perform the funeral rites of his dead mother.

We have no materials to enable us at this distance of time to estimate authoritatively the meaning of these stories regarding Sankara's birth. We see however that Madhava's book makes

absolutely no mention whatever of these damaging traditions. If he had had any knowledge of or belief in them, he would surely not have left them unexplained, for, he has sought to explain away the other calumnies against Sankara as for instance, the incidents relating to Bharati which will be mentioned later on. Further, there is a fairly strong argument to prove that all this talk about his birth being suspicious is unfounded. Both at the time of his renunciation and in connection with the funeral rites of his mother we shall see that Sankara showed an extraordinary affection for her, in the latter case he even went to the length of offending the whole circle of his orthodox relations for the purpose of satisfying his mother's wishes. Now, as it has been a maxim with the Aryan Hindus to regard the unchaste mother the indebted father and the idiotic son as among the worst enemies of man Sankara would hardly have cared to suffer all the troubles and annoyances that he did on his mother's account if she had not deserved that amount of sacrifice and filial love on his part even when such sacrifice was unnecessary according to the strict letter of the law. Accordingly, we may ascribe the whole of his tradition partially to calumny and partially to misguided admiration. It is also considered by some we may add that he was perhaps a posthumous son and it is just possible that this simple fact was afterwards developed by friends no less than enemies on the lines of the mysterious with the most varied and grotesque results in every case.

If these are the difficulties in regard to the ascertainment of the place and the circumstances of Sankara's birth infinitely greater are those that we have to face in trying to ascertain the time of his birth. The exact year of his birth is perhaps lost to us for ever for the

horoscope given in Madhava's book is a mere imitation of Rama's and is therefore worthless* The Sringeri Mutt undoubtedly of the Guru's founding has a list of his successors but unhappily it is an imperfect list for besides other errors it assigns to Soresvaracharya the immediate successor of the Guru a period of 700 years or more! Still as the time of this monk's birth is placed at the close of the eighth century of the Vikrama era if we make some allowance for somebody's carelessness herein it is easy perhaps to reconcile small discrepancies and take 788 A D as the year of the Guru's birth as Max Moller does

Two additional reasons would also seem to support this Madhava's book locates the Buddhists mainly in Kashmir or more generally in the Himalayan regions and Magadha does not seem to have figured in Sankara's days as the stronghold of Buddhism or even as a province where the Buddhists were numerous though in the minority Now as Hsuen Tsang had found in the middle of the seventh century that Magadha was still dominantly Buddhist under Siladitya II a period of about 150 years is not too long for the decline of Buddhism in this province Again if the date assigned by the late Professor Sondaram Pillay to Sambandha could be accepted as the right and proper date and if the allusion said to be found in one of Sankara's devotional songs is a real reference to that Tamilian saint then the year that we have accepted has every probability of being the right

* Two views are generally held as the probable time of the Guru's advent namely "88 A D" which is accepted by one school of thinkers and the close of the 6th century which is held by the other It need hardly be observed that nothing conclusive has been arrived at by either party nor is it likely to be until better data becomes available

date As it is however it can only be regarded as provisional

Telang it must be noted very ably pleads that Sankara must have been somewhere towards the close of the sixth century from a remarkable allusion in his *Sutra Bhashya* to a Purna Varman who was a Buddhist King of Magadha at about that time In the present writer however it seems to need additional and more direct evidence before that date may well be said to have been established For the present then we proceed on the supposition that 788 A D indicates the year of Sankara's birth

2 EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

The boy's early years were spent in the usual way He was initiated into the mysteries of the alphabet at the proper time and soon manifested uncommon intelligence In his seventh year he was about to be invested with the sacred string when his father died His mother had the ceremony conducted later and sent him to learn the *Vedas* and the *Vedangas*—from whom we are not told As has been said of several others it is also said of Sankara that he learned all the *Vedas* and *Shastrias* in two or three years—by the eighth year of his age he had finished his course of studies! And the same writer who tells us this also informs us almost in the same breath that after his return from his Gurne home where he had been staying for some years fathers who had daughters to marry were anxious to offer them in marriage to him Now it is absolutely unheard of among Nambudiris at any time in their history that a boy was married about his eighth year One or the other of these statements therefore has to be rejected and we may regard the tender age when he finished his course of

studier as having been given in a careless manner or with intent to add to the Guna's greatness. We shall therefore reject it and hold that in all probability Sankara had become a young man by the time he returned to his own house having in the usual course completed his study of the *Sastras* in the house and under the guidance of his teacher. This however is not meant to urge that there was nothing extraordinary about him. It only rejects tenth rate and meaningless miracles. How capacious his mind was and how well the seeds of learning now sown in him blossomed forth when the time came for it appears in every line of the commentaries as will be shown later on.

Sankara's student life being over proposals of marriage began to be seriously entertained and his mother must have been as usual busy consulting astrologers about the horoscopes of suitable girls. One day about this time we are told that the sage Agastya and other sages called at Sankara's house and the talk turning on the length of his life Agastya reminded the mother of her choice of a wise but short lived son and told her that her son was accordingly destined to die at an early age. All the story about the shortness of Sankara's life naturally looks very much like a prediction after the event. Accidents have often helped to guide innate tendencies and some accident at this time might have contributed to the sudden turn in Sankara's life. Whatever the reason he seems immediately afterwards to have formed within himself a resolution to renounce the world and become a *Sanjasin*. Thus the talk of marriage was soon thrown into the background by his serious proposal to become at once a *Sanjasin*. The mother as is usual in all similar cases bewailed her sad fate her loneliness during the

remainder of her life and felt sorry that there was to be no one to perform her funeral rites after her death. The *Shastrias* declare that a *Sanyasin* is above all rites and ceremonies so that even the performance of the funeral rites of his parents ceases to be obligatory on him. Sankara assured his mother however that *Sanyasin* or no *Sanyasin* he would always be ready to attend to spiritual requirements. Even then his mother was not satisfied and Sankara was obviously waiting for his opportunity in patience.

One day mother and son went to have their bath in the river. It was then in floods and as he was having his plunge he felt that a crocodile was pulling him by the foot. At once he shouted out to his mother in a loud voice—

I am gone dear mother! The crocodile is dragging me down. Let me have the satisfaction of dying a *Sanyasin*. Give me the permission needed. I shall then die in peace! The mother in this crisis could not of course hesitate and at once told him that he was a *Sanyasin*.

Perhaps there was a real peril and Sankara secured what is known as *Apatsanyasa* or the adoption of the vow of asceticism and mendicancy when death is near. However it was he emerged from the water and declared *Sanyasin*. He repeated his promise to his mother placed her under the care of his relatives to whom he likewise left all his property and left Kaladi in search of a Guru with a view to get himself formally initiated into the holy order of Hindu *Sanyasa*.

3 RENUNCIATION

In almost every part of India there have been recognised seats of Hindu learning sanctified through their association with the names of some great teachers. All the various branches of Ancient Indian learning have had their recognised

founders and 'traditional' leaders. The *Vedānta Sūtras* of Bādarāyana the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* of Jaimini and all other works of that kind have been taken up by particular 'schools' in various parts of the country and their traditional interpretations of religious doctrine and philosophy have been treasured up and handed down by oral teaching to generations of earnest and faithful students. Of such seats of learning Sankara was led to choose one 'on the bank of the Narmada'—evidently hermitage—presided over at this time by a great *Sanyasin* of the name of Govinda. His teacher and perhaps also predecessor in office there was the famous Gaṇḍapada. Hardly anything more has come down to us of Govinda than that he taught Sankara the germs of his philosophy. But as we find that in every work that Sankara has left behind he ascribes himself reverentially as 'the disciple of Śrī Govinda Bhagavatpada' we may well take it to prove the great esteem that Sankara had for this teacher as also the desire to publish his obligations to the teacher. Sankara also pays his respects to his *Parama Guru*—i.e. the teacher's teacher—Gaṇḍapada—thus making it almost certain that the latter had just preceded Govinda.

The description of the first meeting of Govinda and his pupil is given both by Maṇḍana and Chidvilāsa. The former is perhaps at his worst here for he makes Sankara go to the hermitage cast himself at the teacher's feet and on being asked who he was answer—

Master I am neither fire nor air nor earth nor water—oooo of these but the Supreme Spirit shining underneath all phenomena'. In other words he talks *Advaita* long before learning it! Chidvilāsa locates the hermitage on the Himalayas. Sankara goes to Govinda there and pays his respects, and on being asked who he

was says—"I am the son of Sivagorn, a Brahmin of Kerala. My father died in my childhood, and I was brought up by my mother. I have had a fair course of training in the *Shastras*." Then he goes on to give the crocodile incident already referred to and requests the teacher to *formally* initiate him and invest him with the robe of the *Sanyasin*. Perhaps the temple at Badari was built in memory of these days.

Satisfied with this account Govinda received this pupil with pleasure and having made him go through the formalities needed made him a full *Sanyasin* and began to teach him the philosophy that he had himself learnt from Gaudapada. How long the course of discipline and instruction lasted we cannot tell but it must have been a fairly long one. For soon after its completion, Sankara leaves the hermitage and goes to Benares where he receives pupils himself and begins to write his works and propagate his philosophy. It is said that Govinda desired Sankara to go to Benares first and afterwards become one of those peripatetic teachers of religion who abounded so largely in pre-Buddhist as well as post-Buddhist India. To this day his name is invoked by his affectionate disciples as the best of peripatetic teachers.

CHAPTER III

PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT MISSION

I LIFE AT BENARES THE COMMENTARIES AND OTHER WORKS

Accordingly Sankara went to Benares and in that centre of learning soon distinguished himself in dialectics and philosophy and began to attract pupils from various quarters. Among these was a young Brahmin from the land of the Cholas i.e. from Chidambaram or some part of what is now the district of Tanjore. He was admitted as a novice with the name of Padmapada and his devotion to the Guru was unbounded. He therefore, became specially endeared to him and this having roused some impatience in the minds of the other disciples Sankara on one occasion put his favourite's faith to the test in their presence by making him walk across the Ganges as if on solid ground which he is said to have done because he had possessed the mustard seed of faith which moves mountains. We shall learn more later on of his unbounded faith in his master.

The order in which he wrote his works is not known to us but judging from analogy it is clear he must have attempted small things before beginning great ones. There is a tradition that he began with commenting on the Thousand Names of Vishnu (*Vishnu Sahasranama*), and there is nothing improbable in it. The reader will easily find in his terse and beautiful

explanations of these Names and earnest of what was to follow. Many small works of various kinds must have been written by him before he proceeded to comment on the chief *Upanishads*, or on the *Gita*, or, finally, on the *Vedanta-Sūtras*. The commentary on the *Gita* is said to betray some amount of impatience in regard to those who object to an unmarried young man turning out a *Sanyasin*. If it does, it must be evidently the expression of his personal feelings. There were likewise many original monographs composed at intervals as occasion called them forth. One such might be noted as a sample. One day Sankara was going along the street with his pupils to have his midday bath in the *Oagres*. A *Chandala* with his dogs was passing by him when the pupils shouted to ask him to clear the road, as Brahmins do in Malabar to this day. This man however, turned about and asked the *Guru* how he might consistently teach *Advaitism* and practice such differentiating observances. The *Guru* was struck by the answer, and its pertinency to the occasion called forth the five beautiful slokas forming the *Manisha Panchal* every one of which ends thus—"He who has learned to look on phenomena in this (mystic) light is my true *Guru*, be he a *Chandala* or a twice born man. This is my conviction. How the *Chandala* was able to address Sankara thus we are not told, but all difficulties in the situation are avoided by making him *Siva* in disguise. Another and one of the most popular of the *Gurus* minor songs is said to have had a similar origin. It is a poem of about twelve slokas whose refrain is—"Worship Govioda, worship Govioda, worship Govioda! O fool! When thou art face to face with Death at the appointed time it is not the repetition of a grammatical formula that will

'save thee' The story is that he observed at Benares a student enthusiastically engaged in learning Sanskrit Grammar and that with the object of teaching him the futility of such studies in the matter of the salvation of the soul the great *Guru* spontaneously burst out in song and gave vent to one of the most popular and musical of his smaller poems which is even to day very largely used as a devotional song almost all over India

In this manner Sankara lived for several years at Benares and sometimes at Badari to be free from hustle and disturbance composing his works submitting them to the wise men of his acquaintance in those parts and developing and revising them in the light of criticisms and controversies Vyasa himself the reputed author of the *Vedanta Sutra* is said to have on one occasion come to Sankara's abode as an old man and learning there from his pupils that he had commented on the *Vedanta Sutra*s Vyasa entered into a disputation with him on some knotty point and this went on for a whole week till Padmapada finding neither side disposed to give way interposed and prayed that the *Atalars* of Vishnu and Siva might desist from further controversy and give the world peace! This being interpreted probably means that there was a good deal of wrangling over portions of Sankara's commentary on the *Vedanta Sutra*s and that he was perhaps occasionally forced to give up some of his earlier positions and meet opponents half way The old man here might well represent an opponent of that kind whom Sankara could not find it quite easy to satisfy and whose acquaintance with the literature of the *Vedanta* philosophy must have been so good as to entitle him to be looked upon as a re-incarnated Vyasa The cardinal points however had now

become settled and fortified and Sankara stood forth as the most uncompromising Monistic Teacher of India expounding in inimitable language the great truth of the familiar formula *Tattamasi That thou art* '.

2. COMMENCEMENT OF THE TRIUMPHAL TOUR

The most important works of the Guru having thus been finished and tested and taught to his pupils Sankara left Benares accompanied by a large number of his pupils and with large collection of books. Chidvilasa mentions the name of a certain Ratna Singh as the then chief of Benares who on this occasion pressed Sankara to stay on with him. The Guru excused himself by saying that he had been asked by his master to be a peripatetic teacher and that therefore, his mission was to teach and preach over the whole of India. Perhaps this name of the then King of Benares is not of much value for his historical purposes. Not aware as we are of the part played by royal patrons in those days in promulgating religion and in encouraging literature and philosophy we need not doubt that Sankara's fame and influence began to spread by reason of the help rendered by royal chiefs and princes everywhere no less than by his own worth. For Anandagiri and Chidvilasa both agree in saying that teacher had while on tour all the usual paraphernalia which the religious chiefs of Motta display in our own days and these could only have been gifts made by kings to Sankara in recognition of his religious learning and authority.

So helped by the local chiefs of Benares, Sankara began his triumphal progress as a teacher. He must have been then over twenty five years of age if our supposition is correct regarding his age at the time when he became a *Sanyasin*. He first stopped at Prayag (Allahabad) and bathed

at the confluence of the Jomoa and the Ganges and in his prayers remembered his parents. Afterwards while he was resting in the shade of trees along the river bank with his disciples news was brought to him that the great Bhatta the champion of the *Purna Minamisa* school and the extirpator of North Indian Buddhism was about to commit himself to the flames!

3 THE EPISODE OF KUMARILA BHATTA

This is the place to speak at some length of the life and doings of this historic personage. We have already had occasion to get a glance of his life work but we shall now pause to take a fuller view of him. He is believed to have been an Assamese Brahmin by some while others profess to see in his *Vartana* conclusive proof of his connection with the land of Tamil and the following account is mainly taken from what Madhava says of him. He went through the course of studies open to every Brahmin boy. But either his own inclinations or motives such as are known to have influenced Christian missionaries like Father Beschi led him soon to put on the disguise of a Buddhist and learn Buddhist theology from a great teacher of Buddhism. For a time all went on well but on one occasion this teacher in his discourse happened to be more severe than usual in ridiculing the divinity and the sanctity of the Vedas so much so that Bhatta shed tears in consequence of it. His brother students who were all Buddhists observed it and inferred that he must be a heretic. Accordingly these pious people who had taken on themselves the vow never to harm animal life resolved that rather than suffer him to go abroad in possession of their secret doctrines and the weak points of their philosophy and turn their logic against themselves they would do away

with him altogether. On one night as they were all chatting on the terrace of the Buddhist teacher's house they contrived to trip him up and down fell Kumerila exclaiming in a loud voice—

If it be true that the *Vedas* form the true Revelation may they save me from harm! He reached the ground safe enough having lost but one of his eyes which loss we are told was due to the doubt implied in the expression 'If it be true'. He somehow escaped with his life and from that moment became the most uncompromising opponent of the Buddhist faith and made it his mission to carry on a relentless war of controversy against its followers. We have however only the account of what he did at the court of King Sudhanyan though incidentally we are told that he had visited many other courts before arriving there. Here ensued a mighty controversy between the Buddhist teachers at the king's court (the king was the Buddhist himself) and Bhatta the uproar and din caused by which is said to have agitated the very heavens! Bhatta exposed their follies and their weak points with pitiless logic and battered all their strongholds and defeated the enemy everywhere. Then he explained to the king his chief doctrines—that the *Vedas* were true and revealed verbally even as they are and that they therefore formed the best proof of their own authority as well as the touchstone of the authority of the *Sūtras*, *Puranas* and other scriptural works. He held that the earlier part of the *Vedas* relating to the sacrifice was alone capable of saving men so that the really religious part of life according to him was to go through the rites enjoined in the sacrificial *Kanda* or section of the *Vedas*. But the king's turn for abstract reasoning was apparently only of indifferent excellence and so he bluntly said—In matters of dialectics success depends on the amount of one's knowledge and the

length of one's tongue and I therefore declare that I shall hold the faith of that man among you to be true and endorsing who casting himself from the top of the adjacent hill remains whole! Hereupon the Buddhists merely kept looking at each other but the Brahmin readily undertook to risk his person. The ordeal was accordingly gone through in the presence of a large crowd and Bhatta threw himself down with the exclamation already given and reached the ground like a pillow stuffed with down. The Buddhists however argued that it was not the proper test in settling the truth of faith for the body in such cases could be protected from harm by means of drugs or charms or magic practices. The king was wroth and proposed a second test as a kind of ultimatum. He caused a jar to be brought into the assembly with its mouth carefully covered and sealed and said that he would espouse the faith of that party which could say truly what was inside the closed jar. The parties met next morning and the Buddhists declared that the jar contained a serpent while Bhatta said it was the God Vishnu who has the great serpent Sesha as his bed. At these words of the Brahmin the face of the king wore the look of the lotus that has faded in consequence of the pond wherein it grows becoming dry. From this awkward predicament however the king was soon relieved for a voice from heaven declared that the Brahmin was right and that the other party was wrong! The king thus got rid of all his doubts at once and issued this memorable edict— Let all those of my subjects be slain who fail to slay the Buddhists old and young from the Himalaya mountains to the bridge of Rama!

It has been thought desirable to give this account of Komarila at some length because

among other reasons it gives in however distorted a form some of the methods adopted by religious controversialists and revivalists in those days. If Bhatta really had achieved a dialectical victory at this court as at other courts of kings and royal personages tradition would surely have recorded it after the beaten manner. From what we have reproduced from the account given by Madhava it seems clear that Bhatta's dialectic skill did not prove quite so successful here as it might have done elsewhere while the test of falling down 'from the hill' or from some other height was one that Komarila had already undergone and as to how his apparent failure to successfully guess the contents of the jar was retrieved by the support of a voice from heaven we really cannot explain it.

With regard to the king's edict to massacre the Buddhists from the Himalaya mountains to Rama's Bridge however it is safe to say at once that it is mere poetic bombast for the simple reason that previous to the days of the Mahomedan Emperors India knew no sovereign whose sway was quite so extensive. Moreover this same Sodhanvan who could issue such a summary edict for the destruction of Buddhists over the whole of India is represented in another connection as hardly able to overcome a mob of Kapalika fanatics! In the declining days of Buddhism in India the followers of that religion must in many places have been subjected to much inconvenience and even ignominy. The patronage of sovereigns and ruling chiefs which in the earlier days had helped on the propagation of Buddhism in the country of its birth gradually transferred its support to Hinduism so as to effect a complete reconversion of the people to a more or less new adaptation of their ancient faith. This much may be freely admitted.

But to prove that there was any general persecution or massacre of the Buddhists in India, there is next to nothing in the way of adequate evidence.

For, if we content ourselves with the more or less legendary accounts of the persecution either of Buddhists in Hindustan and the Dakhan, or of Jains in Southern India, we shall have to admit that millions upon millions of men were tortured or burnt or destroyed in the various diabolical ways known only to religious persecutors. But taking a more sober view of India and its people and interpreting these legends in the light of comparison with past and present facts and of calm criticism, we have ample reason to believe that religious and political fires of persecution hardly ever discoloured the serene skies of the Indian village communities or any of those parts of the country which lay far removed from town and cities. And even in cities the Buddhists, Jains and Hindos had, as a rule, got on well together for centuries, for the account we have from Hsien Tsang of the relations between the various hostile religious sects does not forebode any such coming storm, as we are asked to believe, raged over Hindustan so fiercely under the guiding hand of Bhatta, in the very next century. Testimony from unexpected quarters continues to come in our own days to prove that a wide fierce and relentless persecution for the sake of religion could never have been a fact in the history of India, and that relatively few cases of persecution which undoubtedly must have occurred at times, were confined as a rule to particular localities, the great capital cities usually, and probably to the tallest blades of the field, i.e., to the most obstinate of sectaries.

4 BHATTA AND SANKARA

On the whole, however, Bhatta seems to have succeeded in converting many large provinces from

Buddhism to Vedic Hinduism, and tradition confirms the fact of his having had a large following. And when he was satisfied that this work was fairly over, he is said to have resolved on the extraordinary course of committing himself to the flames of which, as has been already mentioned, news reached Sankara at Prayag, or as Chidvilasa has it, at Ruddha or Rudrapur of which Bhadra Sena was the ruler at the time. Sankara hastened to the spot and found Bhatta with piles of straw and dried sticks thrown about his person all of which were already aflame. He even then caused himself to be announced to Bhatta and asked for an explanation of his course of conduct. The latter answered that on reviewing his life he had found two unpardonable sins which he had been driven to commit to further his mission. The first was the destruction of his *Guru* Buddhist though he was in the flame of persecution which he (Bhatta) had kindled; the second the practical denial of God in his endeavour to prove the absolute revelational character of the *Vedas* and the sole efficacy of the Vedic rites to save men. The *Smritis* having ordained self-immolation in such cases as the only proper means of purifying oneself, he had resolved on setting the example of obedience so that the world might not have cause to say that he was a person that recked not his own rede. Sankara it is said expressed a desire to have the pleasure of a discussion with him, but, as Bhatta had already become half burnt, he could not collect his thoughts. He therefore asked Sankara to go to Mandana Misra, a champion of the *Karma Marga* almost as good as Bhatta himself. Mandana had married Bhatta's sister and at this time was living at Mahishmati, the capital at one time of Magadha. Bhatta after taking leave of all passed away leaving in the

minds of many people the memory of the work for which he had lived and died

Tragic and full of instruction his narrative undoubtedly sounds but for purposes of history it is to be feared that the part of the story relating to the meeting of Sankara and Bhatta is valueless for chronology does not favor it if we have it upon the right time for Sankara. This touching story then must be regarded like many other touching stories as having other uses than the historical. This remark however applies only to the *meeting* of the *Gurus*. It is in all likelihood a fact that Bhatta ended himself in that extraordinary way for his nature so far as tradition unfolds it seems to have been highly emotional and being terribly so earnest if he had been conscious of having sinned and conscious also that nothing short of that final step would meet the needs of the case he obviously was not the person to shrink from that ordeal. Besides it was perfectly in keeping with the levitical and casuistic nature of the central doctrine he had been preaching all his life.

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

I MANDANA MISRA

We now come to what apparently was the greatest achievement of Sankara—the controversy he had with Mandana Misra and its results. The elaboration of this event in almost all our authorities is evidence of its great importance but strangely enough we have not many facts given about it in a plain and acceptable manner. Leaving Prayag says Madhava Sankara went to Mahishmati where Mandana was living as chief Pandit of the court and in great affluence. A fine palatial house a number of men servants and women servants rows of parrots and other birds repeating the dogmatic formula of their master—*Scatah jra tanati paratah praj anati*—these are enough to show how he was living. Madhava's account places the incident of this controversy relatively at the beginning of Sankara's tour. Anandagiri on the other hand makes Sankara go from Radrapur after Bhatta's self-immolation northwards and reach Vidyalaya lying to the south east of Hastinapura and called at that time by the people there as *Vul Birdu* for there lived Mandana then.

Accordingly Sankara went to Mandana's residence and met him in controversy there. What occurred at the meeting is described by Madhava but here his authority seems to be

decidedly untrustworthy. The only inference from this description seems to be that Mandana, brought up in the *Karma-Minansa* faith, had come to entertain a constitutional hatred for *Sanyasins* (who have to give up their daily and other prescribed rites) as a class of people who were unclean and unfit for association. And we are told that he was performing a *Shraddha* ceremony, when Sankara is said to have somehow 'dropped down' in their midst. The 'dropping down' of Sankara we shall examine presently. At once Mandana was wroth and a delectable talk ensued between the two, of which the following is a sample:—"Where art thou shaven (one)?" "From neck upwards." "I asked the way by which thou hast managed to come." "And what did the way answer thee?" "It answered thy mother is a widow." "Just so; *thy* mother is, therefore, a widow, eh?" And so on it went, growing from bad to worse, till the Brahmins who were present there for dinner interposed and pacified both!

After this fine introduction, however, Sankara desired Mandana to let him have the honour of a controversy with him. And he agreeing most readily, they sought for an umpire.

2. BHARATI

Now it so happened that Mandana had a wife of the name of Bharati, whose learning and accomplishments were very vast and many-sided, and whom accordingly they agreed to honour by appointing as an umpire. Each began with the stipulation that, in case he was defeated, he would take on himself the role of life adopted by his opponent. In other words, Sankara, if defeated, agreed to marry and become a householder—the worst sin which a *Sanyasin* could commit. And Mandana, in a similar manner,

agreed to become a *Sanyasin* and receive the red robe from the hands of his own wife. And then the controversy continued long day after day without any interruption.

Bharati according to Madhava did not sit and listen but was minding her household duties. At the outset she had thrown two garlands one over the shoulders of each of the disputants with a declaration that he whose garland should begin to fade first should consider himself defeated. After several days Mandana's garland began to fade first. Accordingly he owned defeat though in a sullen mood while his wife now that her husband was dead to her prepared to leave home though we are not told whether to go. In all our authorities this lady is treated as an *avatar* of the Goddess of Learning who had come down into the world by way of undergoing punishment for a piece of silliness in her heavenly abode. She laughed it is said at the mistake which the sage Durvasa had committed while chanting the Vedas before Brahma and his wife in a large assembly. The sage became enraged at the woman who had so dared to expose him to ridicule and he pronounced this curse of earthly degradation upon her and subsequently after her prayers had softened his heart he limited the period of her exile! Accordingly her period of banishment being now over she desired to go back to her heavenly abode. It was her mission to proclaim the omniscience of Sankara to the world and having done it by means of her empireship she was free to depart. But Sankara stopped her from going and begged the honour of having a dialectic controversy with her also. He further solicited the favour of her departing only when he should agree to it. Both these requests were granted to him. He now turned to Mandana still brooding

over his defeat, and begged him to reconcile himself to the inevitable seeing that Jambai himself the reputed author of the *Karma Sutra*, would have agreed to his victorious interpretation of the *Sutras*. Mandana, thereupon, cheerfully acquiesced in his defeat and offered to become a *Sanyasin* and follow him. But it is strangely added Bharati now interposed and begged the favour of a controversy with herself, for Sankara had as yet defeated but one half of Mandana herself being the other half! He objected to arguing with women but she quoted precedent. So, as before, the disputation went on for seventeen days. Bharati trying to discomfit Sankara passed from one *Sastra* to another and floundering at last that she could not inflict a defeat on him in any other science she resolved to humble him by means of the Science of Love or *Kamasashtra*.

3 SANKARA'S YOGIC ADVENTURES

Now Sankara had not had the experience needed to answer questions on this science, and so found that his reputation as well as the consequent victory of his cause was at stake. So he begged of her an interval of one month for preparation to meet in argument which being allowed he went to the bank of the Narmada and in the hole of a tree in some forest there, he left his body in hiding and asked some of his disciples to keep watch over it while the living soul was away from it. Then by means of his *yogic* powers he separated his soul from that body and luckily came upon the dead body of a King *Amaruka*, which was about to be committed to flames, and entered it. The king's sons and all the town rejoiced.

However in a short while the ministers as well as the queens of the late king found something extraordinary about their restored sovereign,

and suspected that the soul of some *Mahatman* had come to live in the body of their master. So messengers were secretly sent to search for a human body hidden in lonely forests or caves, and to burn it when found, so that the *Mahatman* might remain with them and the king continue to live for a long time. Meanwhile, Sankara in the body of the king was acquiring the experiences of love with his queens and was recording those experiences in a treatise which has come down to us under the name of *Amarukasataka*. And in the midst of these lovely women and their blandishments, he forgot his promise to his disciples about his going back to them; and the month agreed upon soon passed away. The disciples then began to search for him; and hearing the miraculous resurrection of Amaraka, they went to his city, sought audience with the king, and sang a few philosophic songs which at once roused the memory of Sankara. Then they hastened to the place where the body had been secreted. But by this time the messengers of the king had found it out and had just begun to set fire to it! The unattached soul of Sankara now hastened back and entered his own body in this perilous condition. He then prayed to Vishnu, conceived as Nrisimha, to help him, which He did by sending down a timely shower of rain that put out the flames. Sankara was now in his own body again.

After these adventures he returned to Mandana's abode, and resuming the old controversy, satisfied Bharati on all the points raised by her, and established that he was, indeed, omniscient. Thereafter, according to Madhava, she departed back to her heavenly home. But according to Chidvilasa and others, she was still held spellbound in the air and was taken along with Sankara to Sringeri.

where he caused a temple to be built which he dedicated to her. Here she was persuaded to take up her residence and Bharati is even today worshipped by many devotees at Sringeri. And Mandana offered all his possessions as a gift to Sankara who however, asked him to distribute them to the poor and the deserving and then follow him, which he did. He then became a disciple of Sankara, and when he showed himself worthy of the new philosophy of life he was made into a *Sanjasi* with the name of Sureswara Acharya, the name by which he is known in these parts even to this day.

4 THE CONVERSION OF MANDANA RESTATED— THE REAL BHARATI

This rather long and tedious account of Mandana's conversion has been given in order that we may now examine it so as to find out what exactly it was that occurred, for there certainly must be some truth at the bottom of this strange story which has been here summarised. At first sight it seems so full of incredible details and distortions that one is tempted to reject the whole of it as a tissue of fictitious fancifulness. But on a careful analysis however we find that two main points deserve to be noted and examined. These are — (1) the incidents relating to the great lady known as Bharati and (2) the *yogic* adventures of Sankara.

With regard to Bharati tradition is unanimous that she was really a gifted lady well versed in the *Sastras* and a fitting companion to the famous Pandit Mandana Misra. The theory of her being an *avatar* of the Goddess of Learning is evidently an invention of a later generation intended to honour her memory and scholarship.

Let us try to realise to ourselves the circumstances of the case. Bharati belonged to an age when learning among women was more common and they enjoyed greater freedom than during the centuries following the establishment of Mahomedan rule in India. For it was one of the greatest revolutions of Buddhism to educate women for the profession of religion and make them go forth as nuns and peripatetic preachers even to distant lands. The reader will easily recollect the case of Sangamitta who thus went to Ceylon. And this spirit of Buddhism living as it did for centuries in close contact with Hinduism must have communicated much learning and enlightenment to Indian women of all ranks and stations in life. So that by the ninth century learning among Hindu women especially those of high social standing must have been a fairly common phenomenon. Bharati was therefore a learned lady of exceptional abilities. This fact seems to have escaped the notice of the inventors of the legend we are examining probably because they were living in days when the dark purdah had already shut in the liberty and learning of women in India.

Accordingly after a careful examination of the story as given by Madhava and Chidvilasa the simple facts of the controversy and conversion may be given thus—The disputation between the two great men was perhaps held in the presence of the king of the place. Mandana apparently set out with the rash vow of becoming a *Sanyasin* in case of defeat—not a very improbable supposition in the case of one who had also had an irascible temper. According to his accepted doctrines turning out a *Sanyasin* and giving up the ritualistic religion of the *Vedas* is about the worst sin that one can commit in the world. Bharati naturally came to know of her husband's

defeat and its results to her and then adopted the only sensible course that was open to a woman of her learning and character. She also renounced the world and became, as it were, a nun, and was content to accompany her converted husband wherever he went. Buddhist nuns had been well enough known for long then. And when later on the Sringeri Mutt was established and Mandana was placed at its head as the successor of Sankara, she must have settled down there and passed her days in prayerful devotion and religious realisation, as it befitted a woman of her history and character. She was perfectly justified in the course she adopted, for though, with the donning of the red robe, Mandana had become dead to her as husband, she was, indeed, very wise in following him and Sankara in the capacity of a devoted disciple. Lastly her noble and resigned life in her later days and her peaceful end at Sringeri added lustre to her reputation for uncommon learning and wise accomplishments, and formed the ground-work of the admiration, which may even now be observed in a concrete form in the temple that had been so worthily dedicated to her at Sringeri. Indeed, there cannot be much doubt that Sankara's revival of Vedantic Hinduism in India is largely indebted to this famous and venerable lady, although we cannot now measure accurately the value of her contribution to the cause of progressive Hinduism in her days. To place her on the pedestal of immortal glory, it is enough for us to know that Sankara considered her to be worthy of worship and reverential commemoration.

5. THE YOGIC MIRACLE EXAMINED

If we are prepared to admit that this view is the most probable one in regard to Bharati, then the *yogic* adventures of Sankara have to be similarly examined. The possibility of one man's

soul entering at his own pleasure the body of another man is not granted by modern science. The question of the reality of the soul itself is one on which modern psychology has not as yet said the last word, though the experimental psychology of the Indian *Yoga* seems, nevertheless, to be rational enough in leading us to the proof of the reality of the soul. But all those wonder-working *Yogic* powers, which are amply described in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist writings, are things about which the best attitude now is one of suspended judgment. Accordingly the whole story of the transference of Sankara's soul into Amaroka's body has to be rejected as being undemonstrable, the more because the motive assigned for this adventure is after all very silly and inconsistent with the learning and subsequent conduct of Bharati. In so treating this question of soul transference, however, it is not meant to condemn the philosophy or the psychology or the practice of *Yoga* as being in itself impossible—that will be going out of the way and highly presumptuous. But with all the deference due to those who believe in *yoga* however we may say that the works of the Teacher which luckily we still possess, are miracles of the most ardent admirer. We shall accordingly venture to conclude that the whole of this episode is due to the misguided enthusiasm of later admirers, from whom every great person has reason to pray to be saved.

The result of Sankara's advent to Mahishmati was not merely that Mandana was converted, but that the king and his court were likewise converted so as to follow his doctrines. For Sankara while emphasising *jñāna* or knowledge of the Supreme Spirit as the chief object of man's endeavors here on earth did not go the length of rejecting all the other means of attain

ing the *summum bonum* as Bhatta and other controversialists had egoistically done before. This spirit of compromise in all likelihood made his work easier for there was but little revolutionary in his contentions. The lovers of ceremonialism were allowed to go on with their *Karmas*—only the spirit which underlay the doing of them had to become different.

6 TOUR THROUGH THE DEKHAṆ DISTRICTS

Having done his work at Mahishmati, Sankara left with his disciples for the South of India and passed through Maharashtra preaching his doctrines wherever he went. He denounced all wicked practices and sent forth disciples where he could not go himself to spread the light of the Vedānta. A class of Brahmins here worshipped Śiva under the name of Mallari and religiously honoured and exalted the position of the dog which was the animal that this God loved to ride on. But Sankara could easily prove that they were hopelessly in the wrong and show them that the dog being an unclean animal did not deserve any worship. Mallari is even now known to be the tutelary deity of many Marhatta families and at the festival of Dasara that deity receives special worship at their hands. But his dog or dogs are not heard of in our days as objects of worship.

There was likewise the sect of *Kapalikas* of atrocious memory whom Sankara encountered hereabout. From one of them he seems to have had a narrow escape. The favourite deity of the *Kapalikas* is Bhairava the Destroyer who has a peculiar fondness for the heads of learned Brahmins the more learned and pious the better! Such a head presented to him streaming with warm blood had been conceived to be the most acceptable offering. A section of Marhatta

Brahmins of the name of *Karadis* have had a bad reputation among the people of South India for catching stray pilgrims from the South to Benares and after fattening them for a whole year offering them to Durga in sacrifice at the close of the Dasara as an acceptable and a highly valuable offering. This charge against them is nothing new and it was in all likelihood a *Karadi* Brahmin of these parts that approached Sankara at this time with the object of sacrificing him to Kali. There is nothing unique about this belief in human sacrifice for history has known it all the world over in very many repulsive and piteous forms.

Madhava says that the *Kapalika* approached Sankara and begged for his head as a gift employing certain sophistries of *Adiantism* to prove that Sankara could not lose anything by the loss of the head while he himself gained thereby the highest object of his attainment. Sankara agreed and asked him to come and take it while he was alone and was absorbed in contemplation. Accordingly the *Kapalika* went and was just aiming the fatal blow when Padmapada who had just then returned caught hold of his uplifted arm knocked him down and killed him with his own weapon. Madhava in relating this killing of the *Kapalika* says that the spirit of the fierce God Narasimha was then on Padmapada and that Sankara finding out what had taken place managed to pacify the infuriated disciple.

7 THE SRINGERI MUTT

Then he travelled to the south till he reached the source of the Tungabhadra where he stopped and built a temple which he dedicated to the Goddess of Learning. Under the name of Sarada that Goddess is to this day the presiding deity

of the templo there. Chidvilasa says that he was helped in this work by a local chief of the name of Vira-Sena. To the templo he attached a *Mutt* and placed the most learned of his disciples, Mandana, as its head, with the name of Soreswara Acharya, by which name he is still known in the records of that *Mutt*. The institution is "the Sringeri *Mutt*" of to day, the most richly endowed and the most widely honored of South Indian religious institutions.

Madhava here gives an account of the daily monastic life of Sankara, which is just what one finds in *Mutt*s even in our own days—with the exception that there was then much original teaching and composition going on therein, because of the presence of the Founder of a new School of Philosophy.

5. THE GLOSS OF PADMAPADA

In connection with the work of religious and philosophic teaching here at Sringeri, we come upon an exhibition of jealousy among the disciples. Even in matters which the *Guru* might view as peculiarly his own, he did not always find it possible to have his own way. At this time Sankara was desirous that his commentary on the *Vedanta Sūtras* should have a gloss added to it to prevent misconception and to supply ellipses. He seems to have felt convinced that Mandana's learning both in the *Karmic* and in his own philosophy, had fitted him best for his task, and he, therefore, asked him to carry it out. At once Sankara's other disciples set up Padmapada, the earliest and undoubtedly the most devoted of his followers, to do the same work. They argued plausibly enough that Mandana's conversion was on account of his defeat in controversy, and was not, therefore, the result of hearty conviction. They feared that his gloss might prove dangerous

to Sankara's system for he might unconsciously or even deliberately show leanings towards the faith in which he had been brought up before. They therefore thought that Padmapada should be asked to do it for his devotion to the *Guru* had been well tested and he had all the teachings of the *Guru* imparted to him thrice over by the *Guru* himself. Although he was born a *Prabhakara* he had been well enough weaned from his earlier faith even in his youth and had therefore as they contended become worthy of the honour and trust implied in the permission granted to annotate the *Gurus* works. Padmapada however suggested Anandagiri or Hastamalala who had joined Sankara in his tour through Maharashtra in order that he himself might appear less selfish in the eyes of his teacher. Sankara felt perplexed and vexed. He felt sure that Mandana was by his intimate knowledge of the strong and weak points of the *Karma Mimamsa* Philosophy the best fitted among his disciples yet in his great undertaking he did not want to go against the wishes of the majority among them. So he suffered Padmapada to do the work in spite of his own misgivings and was really sorry that his great commentary had to lose the benefit of the gloss of so valuable a scholar as Mandana. To console the latter however Sankara allowed him to annotate his commentaries on the chief *Upanishads* and also to compose one or two original works. This unseemly quarrel shows the spirit of the age and the suspicion which ever haunts the faithful in full proportion to the intensity of their faith. It seems to be the curse from which the followers of no great religious teacher can be said to have been free. The reader of the Bible will easily recollect the quarrel among the disciples of Christ for precedence

Padmapada then annotated his master's commentary on the *Iedanta Sutras* and in doing it he exposed the flaws of the *Prabhalara* school of the *Pirra Mistama* in ridicule over and over again. He seems to have been a vain man for having done this work he asked the *Gurus* permission to go to Rameswar—perhaps to parade his learning in the land of his birth. Permission having been given he went to Chidambaram (his native place according to Chidvilasa) which was at that time the stronghold of the *Prabhalara* faith. Here Padmapada stayed with his uncle who was still a follower of the *Prabhalara* faith. This person happening to read portions of his nephew's gloss on Sankara's great commentary resolved to wreak his vengeance on the manuscript. And Padmapada having in a moment of weakness agreed to leave his books behind him and set out for Rameswar in his absence the uncle contrived to consign the books to the flames. On the nephew's return he of course expressed great sorrow for the mishap. Padmapada was at a loss to know how then to proceed and was not sure if he could do the work again so well. It is added that his uncle had also had the villainy to drag him with a view to spoil his intelligence. He at last returned with a drooping heart and joined his master once again.

CHAPTER V

LAST DAYS

1 SANKARĀ'S MOTHER—HER FUNERAL RITES

And now we come to the most pathetic part of Sankarā's life. Tradition is unanimous herein, and there is nothing in the narrative to make it in itself improbable. Some time after Padmapada left for Rameswai, Sankar, either longing to see his mother or having had news conveyed to him of the declining state of her health, left his disciples behind at Sringeri, and went apparently all alone to Kaladi. His mother was then bed-ridden, and was, of course, exceedingly glad to see him. He touched her feet in reverence—setting the rules of *Sanyasa* at defiance. Being very ill and her thoughts all turned to the other world, she desired her son whose fame had doubtless reached her ears to discourse to her on things that would bestow peace and salvation on her soul. He began to preach to her his high philosophy evidently under-rating the difficulties in comprehending it. So the mother desired him to tell her of things which she could easily understand. Accordingly he glorified Siva in a hymn of praise composed by himself. The messengers of Siva soon made their appearance, but their terrific shapes were too much for her and she refused to go along with them to the world of Siva. Then Saolara praised Vishnu and his messengers coming down in bright and agreeable forms, she blessed her son, gave up her body and went along with them to the abode of Vishnu.

The mother being dead Sankara sought to fulfil the promise he had made to her at the time of his renunciation and desired to perform her funeral rites himself. This however, was not easy, for the whole *Agrahara* opposed it as being against the *Smritis* and established practice, and Nambudris of all the orthodox people in the world are loath to suffer any deviation from the clerical law to occur in their midst unopposed. If Sankara was a *Sanyasin* as he said he was he had nothing to do with funeral rites and if he persisted in performing them he was clearly an impostor in the garb of a *Sanyasin* and must be hunted like a heretic and sinner. Arguing the affair in this manner the relatives of Sankara held aloof and in spite of his entreaties they would neither help him to remove the dead body, nor as tradition pathetically adds let him have fire to burn it with. Unable to soften their hearts he resolved to do the rites without any body's help and girding himself up for it he bore the body of his mother to the back yard of the house and making there a pyre with dried sticks he laid the body on it made fire for the cremation and performed all the rites pertaining to the funeral ceremony. Tradition further adds that unable to remove the body entire he cut it and removed the pieces one by one—and having found only stems of the plantain tree for fuel he exercised his divine power and set them on fire!

2. REMARKS THEREON

The funeral rites being over he sought to find some means of revenging himself on his heartless relatives. Madhava adds an apology for this fit of anger and says—'Although some of the deeds of the great do not seem to conform to *Shastraic* rules ordinarily observed such persons are not to be censured on that account.'

Sankara is said to have persuaded the local chief to issue an edict prohibiting those relatives from chanting the *Vedas* and thus making them unfit to entertain *Sanyasins* as guests. They were further compelled to set apart in each *Illam* a corner of its own compound to burn the dead of the family, and to see that every dead body should be cut into parts and then burnt!

Now it cannot be denied that Hindu princes have often issued edicts, changing religions and social practices or the status of particular classes among their subjects. There are many historic instances to illustrate this. Indeed, there would have been nothing strange in what this chief is alleged to have done at the instigation of Sankara, if we can be sure that he, in fact, had sufficient influence for it at the court of this local chieftain. But beyond the bare mention of a 'Rajasekhara' referred to just before the *Guru's* renunciation, who, on one occasion at that period, is said to have gone to the young Brahmin to have a view of one whose great learning had already begun to be noised abroad, Madhava tells us little from which Sankara's influence at his court may well be estimated. Accordingly the whole question of this supposed edict looks suspicious for want of conclusive evidence. It is a fact, however, which may interest many readers, that the Nambudris continue to this day the formality of mangling the dead bodies of their relations before they are removed to the place of cremation. A knife is made just to touch the various joints of the body. It is also a fact in most, if not all, the *Illams* of the Nambudris that a corner of their spacious compound serves as the cremation ground of the family. And, lastly, it is a fact also that some among the Nambudris do not learn how to chant the *Vedas*. If called on to explain the origin of any of these

practices they repeat the story of the edict and say that the observances have continued so long as to become included in their *Sritis*

The tale relating to the funeral rites makes just one thing clear that Sankara failed to become a prophet in his own land. There is but one difficulty however in the way of our admitting the whole of this story as true. For if Sankara's name and fame had spread so far and so wide as we may naturally infer from the story of his tour and his controversies as recorded it certainly looks very odd that during the whole of his troublous period of his mother's funeral ceremonies there was not a single disciple by him to help him. This difficulty Madhava avoids by representing that Sankara had left every one of his disciples behind and hastened to mother's home on learning that she was seriously ill. Perhaps Anandagiri is right in placing the incident of the death of Sankara's mother at an earlier period in his life.

Viewed as a whole the narrative relating to the funeral rites of Sankara's mother is exceedingly instructive as an act of rare filial affection furnishing to common men one of the best illustrations of the moral beauty and humanity which are to be found in the noble duty of a man having to honour the sacred memory of his mother.

3 TOUR THROUGH THE EAST COAST DISTRICTS

Returning to Sringeri he set out sometime afterwards with a large number of followers on a tour through the Eastern coast stopping in important centres of learning at the capitals of kingdoms and places of pilgrimage to preach his doctrines and to condemn whatever wicked practices were therein prevalent. At Puri he established a *Mutt* which still goes by the name of *Gorardhan*.

Mutt Conjeevaram seems at that time to have been a stronghold of *Saktas*, whom Sankara is said to have argued out of their abominations. He purified their temples and the pre-eminence, which the Goddess Kamakshi of Kanchi and Minakshi of Madura have this day preserved, would seem to bear out the prevalence at one time of Sakti worship in all these regions and its purification under Brahminical influence. But it is perhaps dangerous to theorise too much. We are briefly told that in the course of this tour the kings of the Chola and Pandya kingdoms were won over. The net results of the tour was that the abominations of the *Saktas*, *Ganapathyas*, *Kapalikas* and the rest of their tribe received a severe check and permanent arrangements were made at Sringeri to periodically attack the centres of immoral and unholy religious rites so as to chase them away altogether in due course. This tour of reformation and religious purification must have lasted fairly long.

4 FINAL TOUR THROUGH HINDUSTAN

At length, after making arrangements to carry on his missionary work in the South and after firmly establishing the Sringeri Mutt with a proper staff, Sankara left once again for the North. Passing through the Berara, he stopped for some time at Ujjain. From the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa as well as from other sources, we learn that some kind of *Saiva* worship was prevalent here which apparently needed the shedding of a good deal of the blood of sacrificial victims. Madhava calls the devotees of this deity by the name of Bhairavas and with this sect Sankara began to argue and denounce their iniquities which roused the mob there, whose leader was significantly called *Krakacha* which means a saw. Madhava brings in here once again King Sindhavan who has

already been mentioned. The fact seems to be that Sankara first won over the local chief to his faith, and with his help put down the atrocities of the Bhairavashy force, when perhaps argument had proved to be of no avail with them. Thence he passed on to Gojrat and there at Dwaraka established a Matt which is in existence even now and has some following. He then travelled along the course of the Ganges, in which journey he is said to have won victories in controversy over many great personages such as Bhaskara, Basa, Dandio, Mayora and others. But if the date we accepted is the correct one for Sankara, many of these controversial victories have to be treated as inventions. He is also said to have gone to Kashmir to win the famous Seat of Learning there, which was meant as a prize to the wisest of men; and this information is useful perhaps as showing that Buddhists could be found in large numbers chiefly in the Himalayan regions even in Sankara's days.

4. ABHINAVA GUPTA—SANKARA'S END

The last controversial victory, which seems to have much to support its reality, was at Kamrup, or Ganhat, as it is now called, in Assam, where Sankara triumphed over the *Sakta* commentator Abhinava Gupta. This man felt his defeat so keenly that he resolved to be somehow revenged on his opponent. Accordingly he utilised knowledge of Black Magic, and by means of it caused Sankara to be afflicted with a very serious form of hemorrhoids; and though he did not mind it for a while, the disciples who were doing him personal service soon saw that the disease was growing upon him; and they are said to have consulted many doctors and tried many prescriptions in vain. At length a messenger from Siva came and revealed the secret. At once Padmapada

was wroth, and being a clever hand himself in the Black Art, he undid Gupta's evil work very easily and Sankara became whole as before

Although we are told that Sankara thus got well, what followed soon after shows that the disease must have severely told on him, and that there was only some temporary relief, during which he managed to go to Badari and establish a Mutt there as well as build a temple to Narayana. After this he retired to Kedarnath. And here, in his thirty second year, as it is stated by Madhava and several others, or in his thirty eighth year, as another tradition has it (which latter is accepted by the present writer), the great Teacher passed away in the year A D 828

CHAPTER VI.

THE WORK OF SANKARA

1 THE MUTTS

It is not proposed in this sketch to trace the fortunes of Sankara's system in times later than his own, or those of his successors at the various Mutts established by him. In the first place, the materials are not available for it, and in the next such a description is outside our limits. It is enough for our purpose to say that the four Mutts we have incidentally mentioned continue to exist in greater or lesser affluence

even now, after having had their usual ups and downs in the course of about twelve historic centuries. The Sringeri Mutt is our own part knew very bright days during the beginning and early development of the Vijayanagar Kingdom, but it is to be feared that even this Mutt has got but few valuable records to enable one to write its history.

These Mutts though founded by the same teacher and for the same purpose have had but little connection with each other administrative, social or religious. But at the same time there has been no rivalry known between any two of them. India having apparently proved wide enough for all of them to work smoothly in. There has been however one small accession in the south caused by the establishment of a Mutt now at Kumbakonam which has a limited following in Tanjore and the adjoining districts. That this Kumbakonam Mutt is comparatively modern, appears to be probable though its exact age cannot be well ascertained.

THE CARDINAL DOCTRINE OF SANKARA AND ITS GENESIS

It is now our business to examine the net result of Sankara's life and labours. We have already taken note of what was haunting millions of ears about his time. We saw how Buddhism rose from the *Upanishads* grew and after a long life, decayed in the land of its birth. It is often said that Buddhism disappeared from India by persecution. We have ample testimony however, to prove that this persecution is a myth. Buddhism simply lost in the revived Hinduism. A long course of peaceful life side by side had certainly led to many silent assimilations and natural borrowings—the practical abolition of animal sacrifices the gorgeous and elaborate

festivals and processions and the owning of Buddha as an *avatar* of Vishnu being some of those that lie on the surface. On the side of thought this process culminated in the practical acceptance and wide adoption of the *Bhagavad Gita* and its most comprehensive philosophy, which unlike the old 'exclusive' religions of the *Vedas* may be followed and practised by all classes of people. Furthermore the most prominent failings of Buddhism came to be noted and guarded against to save Hinduism from a like fate. For instance the *Bhakti Marga* or the path of love and devotion to God as explained in some of the most eloquent passages of a *Bhagavatha* or *Vishnu Purana* is an open protest against the atheism of Buddhists. Again while orders of monks were being slowly organised in imitation of Buddhists care was taken to rigorously exclude women from them.

Having been born and brought up amidst such circumstances Sankara soon carved out for himself at a very early stage of his life a clear and definite course. It was to give a common basis to the most prevalent forms of the Vedic faith and to reconcile all these to a cardinal ordinating idea. Hence arose his Pantheism, which sees the Great First Cause the Essence of Intelligence everywhere about us and in us. With the help of this doctrine supported as it is by many Vedic texts it was easy for his master mind to show wherever he went that the religious sects were all narrow and illogical and that if properly understood there was no real antagonism at all between the rival sects and no good ground for the rise of bad blood in the practice of religion or the contemplation of philosophy.

3 THE END AND THE MEANS

For our immediate purpose we must be satisfied with a bare statement of his chief

doctrines. He started with the hypothesis of a *Maya* or *Atidya* an ignorance which is objective* nothing really exists but the Supreme Spirit, so that what is commonly called Nature (animate and inanimate) is but an illusion and a dream, caused by this Ignorance which surrounds the Supreme Spirit, and hides It, 'even as the smoke that rises from the fire hides blaze for a time'. Phenomena appear real, for the same reason that things seen in a dream are real so long as the dream lasts or for the reason that mother of pearl is mistaken for silver, or a piece of rope for a snake until the illusion goes away. The business of life is therefore, to cast off the gross sheaths that surround the spirit within us and to realise its identity with the Supreme Spirit. The chief means of attaining this end is the cultivation of true knowledge, that is the study of the *Vedanta* and the incessant contemplation of its teachings. Special emphasis had to be laid on this means as Saṅkara had found that Bhaṭṭa had 'bent the bow too much on the other side' and held that the purely physical *Karma* or going through a round of ritualistic formalities was alone sufficient to secure salvation. In all doctrinal passages, therefore he gives prominence to the acquisition of Vedantic knowledge. But that does not mean, however, that he rejected the other means for he accepted the *Karmic* road also as one of the roads to take the soul finally to the goal. Again nowhere in his writings is he more eloquent than in his songs in exemplification and praise of the *Bhakti Marga*.

The Supreme Spirit of Saṅkara is free from all attributes, and the only positive statement that can be made about it is that It is and is

the Essence of Intelligence and Bliss. This has led the author of *Manu-smṛiti* to say that Sankara has called Nothingness by the name of *Brahman*, and a recent writer to declare that 'he retained the name of God to save his religion from becoming Buddhistic atheism.' Now it cannot be denied that Buddhistic philosophy had considerable effect on him, though it is hard to measure the extent of that influence. But in every sensible statement of Sankara's teachings, one sees Pantheism and not Atheism governing them. *And Pantheism and Atheism must always be poles apart*, state it how we will.

The end of a man being the realisation of the identity of his own spirit with the Supreme Spirit and the study of Vedānta and the contemplation of its teachings being the best means of attaining it Sankara also recommended less difficult paths of salvation for such people as are not fitted for that kind of self-realisation. The practice of self-denial and of other moral virtues, devotion to God and the careful discharge of each man's duties, as ordained by the scriptures are declared by him to be preliminaries to acquiring in due course the needed moral competency for the study of the Vedānta and the realisation of its ideals. Man is to do his secular as well as religious duties not because it will give him good things here or in the other world, as Bhāṭṭa had said but because they have to be done and at every step the Vedāntin is called upon to bear in mind these sublime words of the *Gītā* — The master of the sacrifice who is Brahman has thrown into the sacrificial fire which is Brahman the sacrificial rice which Brahman for the satisfaction of Brahman, and that which that master wants to attain is like wise Brahman!

This comprehensive and pantheistic basis while it enabled the hitherto hostile sects to worship each its own deity as before showed at the same time conclusive reasons for mutual toleration and friendliness. Sankara's mission looked at thus was therefore not to destroy but to fulfil for it was by no means suppression of acts of outward devotion nor of the preferential worship of any acknowledged pre-eminent Deity. So when the admission was made that *Brahman* was the Supreme Spirit the First Cause as distinct from *Siva* or *Vishnu* the Teacher left undisturbed *having regard to human frailties* the observance of such rites and worship of such deities as are either prescribed by the Vedas or of works not incompatible with their authority. Of these deities *five* had already become recognised as deserving worship at the hands of every Vedic sect—the *Blagaratha* for instance mentions it—and the worshippers of these five comprised the bulk of the people though each sect was subdivided into a large number of mutually repellent groups. They are the *Son* *Ambika* (*Sakti*) *Vishnu* *Ganapati* and *Siva*.

As his plans were moderate and conciliatory so was his method agreeable and perhaps about the best to be employed in such matters. Anandagiri is specially valuable in giving us a fair idea of what this method was. Wherever he went he asked the leaders of thought who opposed him to state their case and explain the doctrines and practices. After they did it he began to point out how far he could go with them—and in the case of most of them he could go with them some way as they had all based their faith on the authority of the Vedas. Next came the points of difference—philosophical as well as practical. Those who quoted stray

sentences (as the Mallari worshippers did) from the Vedas in support of their objectionable doctrines or practices, he could answer by quots a host of passages quoted against them and those who had based their evil doings on *Smritis* were told that it was a well understood axiom that, as against *Smritis*, *Smritis* could not stand, and that as against *Smritis*, *Puranas* could not stand. One or two small instances most suffice to illustrate this method. The champions of Son worship argued that that Luminary was Supreme Spirit, because a well-known text says— "This sun is Brahman." But Sankara could quote a number of texts to the contrary, for instance, one which runs—"The Son shines from fear of this (Brahman)," or again—"The Son, the Moon all shine with the light borrowed from the Supreme Light" and so on. The worshippers of Siva or Vishnu or Ganespati could likewise receive no support from the Vedas, and the authority of the Vedas herein was supreme, and passage after passage followed in defence of this position. No wonder that, with this kind of tact as well as argument, he was able to influence thoughtful people everywhere. How different this from the method which has been pursued by many another teacher in India, and from the one which is being commonly pursued by our *Padri* friends and people of their likeness! These latter begin wherever they go by arrogating to themselves the whole truth and nothing but the truth leaving with a unique impartiality to their opponents the whole of the error and nothing but error.

If any person's style is an index of his mind the style of Sankara is one. It has been said that the sublimest philosophy expresses itself in the simplest language, and, if we want the best illustration to prove it, we have to go to Sankara.

for it. Bewitching and marvellous and simple. it is at once the language of the child and the philosopher is one. No wonder then that enemies should bear testimony to it, even while they malign his doctrines. Viewed from any standpoint, it is truly a privilege to read a bit of him or hear some of his *slokas* sung to you. He is, therefore, undoubtedly the great *Bhadrakara* 'factor for good' to whoever cares to approach him.

5. HIS CHIEF PRACTICAL REFORMS

We might now take a rapid survey of the chief practical reforms which the Guru was able to effect either himself directly or through the agency of his successors working on the lines sketched out by him. They are, from one point of view, of greater interest to us than his doctrines which also, at all times, he understood and utilised only by a few. It might be that Sankara did not accomplish all the reforms ascribed to him during the short period of his mission, but that he sketched the lines on which his successors worked. But it might also be that those days were more plastic than our own, because Hinduism was then living in closer contact with an aggressive offspring of its own, which had even in its early days achieved astounding success. Then again both Buddhist and Hindu kings were freely issuing edicts introducing changes in faith and in social practice. People, therefore, in those days, and even long after Sankara's time, could have had no idea of the chill process of crystallisation that has come upon our life since, and has frozen the genial current of our soul with that withering curse of each being wise in his own conceit and each deluding himself with the belief that he lives in the best of all worlds, and being accustomed to changes, gentle as well as violent, they easily suffered their practices to change, wherever there was any need for it. At

all events the thinking people had not in those days been brought up as they too often are now, in the belief that the world had never changed and that every local practice had remained just what it was in the days of Manu!

According to our authorities the chief reforms with which Sankara concerned himself were the following —

(1) Prohibition of marking the body with hot metallic designs. Readers can easily understand what this means. The Sri Vaishnavas and Madhvas continue to this day to mark every one among them on the shoulders and elsewhere with the designs of the conch and disc of Vishnu. Anandagiri makes a great deal too much of this reform and Madhava likewise lays much stress on it. This circumstance throws some doubt on the value of these books as original authorities and leads one to ask oneself whether after all some of these might not have been counterblasts to hostile books finding favour with the public—for instance *Madhya Vyasa*.

(2) No sects that Sankara had to contend against were found to have fallen so low in morality as the Saktas and the Bhairavas. The former in these days are happily found but in few localities Assam being the most prominent of them and the Coromandel Coast showing stray cases here and there. The sect is as is well known divided against itself and the *Sattachara* or left handed variety of it is the most loathsome form that religion has ever assumed. The *Daśshinachara* or right handed variety has been influenced by the superior moral atmosphere surrounding it so as to make its once detestable practices comparatively innocent to suit the iron age of

Kali." If in our own days the abominations of the *baktas* have learned to hide their heads in shame and are found only in some dark corners no small part of the credit is due to the chastening influence of Sankara's teaching and his earnest endeavour to put evil down. He also fought against the hideous worshippers of Ganesa whose ritual decency forbids us to describe. In both these cases however, be it noted actual worship of Sakti and of Ganesa was retained but the abominations connected therewith were condemned and abolished.

(3) If he used arguments against the *Saktas* he did not hesitate to use force wherever he could against the *Bhairavas* or *Kapalikas* who in any age and under any circumstances would deserve that and even worse treatment. Although we may make large allowances in their favour, the account we have of their ways is so horrid and detestable that no one can have anything but praise to offer to Sankara for his labours against this pestilential religious sect.

6 SANKARITE MONKS

Lastly, he organised *Mottas* and organised ten definite orders of *Sanyasins* under the *Dasnamas*, probably in unconscious imitation of similar Buddhistic organisations. The continuation of the *Motta* was provided for by the institution of a succession of *Sanyasin* chief while their safety was entrusted to neighboring rulers who had usually become converts in the new faith. The *Dasnamas* add at the end of their names any

* These statements have drawn from the *Theosophist* some remarks about all of us moving in the direction of *Dakṣiṇā* Saktas in some occult way. But as this sketch has followed the logic of common sense throughout it is hoped that the kind reviewer will not take it amiss that the writer still remains obdurate.

one of the following suffixes *Saraswati Bharoti Puri Giri Tirtha Asrama Vano Aranya, Pariata and Sagara*. This list is seen occasionally in slightly altered forms. Some of *Sanyasins* at the head of the Sringeri Mutt have *Bharatis* (the late incumbent was also one), *Aranya* in *Vidyaranya*. These *Sanyasins* are recruited from all castes and some rise to become *Atimahasamis* (superior to caste observances) and dine with all classes of people without suffering for it in the estimation of the high born. Perhaps this is due to the silent influence of the Buddhistic rules which from their very beginning had forbidden caste scruples within the monasteries. *Paramahansas* represent the highest grades and one can attain this grade only by a long course of holy life and the gathering of Vedantic knowledge. In other words men rise to be *Paramahansas* by merit and Sankara's writings invariably have the following colophon — Thus is this finished which has been composed by Sankara Bhagavatpada the best of peripatetic teachers of the grade of *Paramahansas* and the disciple of Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada.

Profiting by the lessons which the Buddhistic inclusion of women as *Parivrajikas* in the body of ordained ascetics had taught and true to the old ideal of the *Smritis* under which women were never allowed independence Sankara rigorously excluded women from his monasteries which were meant to serve only as schools of learning as peripatetic teaching institutions and as asylums for these men who courted poverty and purity and freedom from the thralldom of the world.

7 THE RESULTS—THE FUTURE

The effect of these doctrinal and practical reforms has had a widespread and far reaching importance. We have often heard it said that Hinduism has been unique in that it has been

unique in that it has been able to assimilate alien faiths and include them within itself. Accordingly it has also been said that it is the most tolerant of the religions of the world. In so far as these statements are true one of the best exponents in comparatively later times of this comprehensive and tolerant Hinduism was by general consent Sankara. His followers are of course heterogeneous in composition but taken on the whole they form according to Mr L. Rice in the *Mysore Gazetteer* and according to a host of other observant authorities the most tolerant of the Hindu sects. This then is one of Sankara's chief claims on our admiration. There have indeed been reformers since his time some of them working in a wider sphere like Kabir and Nanak who sought to unite in harmony even the Hindus and the Mohammedans but so far as toleration and breadth of view are concerned within the pale of Hinduism itself subsequent movements must be called retrograde.

The one weak point in Sankara's system may now be noted as having formed the underlying cause of subsequent secessions. We saw that he was forced to lay unusual stress on *jnana* or the true realisation of God and like Socrates of old sought to rationalise the whole Universe to counteract the extravagances of Bhakti. Now this kind of wisdom is clearly not within the reach of common men to whom Sankara's teaching is accordingly a sealed book. Then again a little knowledge which is dangerous in all cases is most dangerous here and is apt to give rise to many pious hombogs and deluded weaklings who will cite Scripture for their own purposes. Further even among the most learned in Sankara's school of Vedanta a tendency has often been seen to make religion more an affair of the head than of the heart. And not withstanding

his great eloquence in praise of *Bhakti* or religious devotion the injunction given to the less gifted and therefore the great majority of his followers to keep mechanically repeating the formula *I am Brahman* is but a sorry substitute for genuine and intelligible *Bhakti*. This it cannot be denied began to be felt in succeeding times and led to the subsequent *Bhagavata* movements in the eleventh twelfth and the following centuries.

Another charge against him has been brought by those who have been most opposed to his philosophy—that he has by force read his own doctrines into the *Sutras* of Badarayana. But we have already seen that not merely Sankara but every other philosopher or poet known to history has had to inhale much before he could exhale so that his commentary on the *Vedanta Sutras* includes not only the meaning of the original but also all the explanations that had been given by subsequent students before his time and naturally his own peculiar views and doctrines are also embodied therein for otherwise he would have founded nothing. There is nothing to marvel here for the student of history for all commentators have at all times done the same thing more or less. Great men as well as little men can never escape from the influence of the process in which they form part. And as for the *Sutras* it is in their nature to be easily elastic! and when unsupported by tradition nothing indeed can be made out of them. Accordingly this objection for if it is admitted every teacher suffers, while if we disregard *Parampara* we cut ourselves adrift.

During the last fifty years if not for a longer time Sankara and his philosophy have received additional importance through the zeal of Western scholars and Theosophists and he

unique in that it has been able to assimilate alien faiths and include them within itself. Accordingly it has also been said that it is the most tolerant of the religions of the world. In so far as these statements are true one of the best exponents in comparatively later times of this comprehensive and tolerant Hinduism was by general consent Sankara. His followers are of course heterogeneous in composition but taken on the whole they form according to Mr L. Rice in the *Myore Gazetteer* and according to a host of other observant authorities the most tolerant of the Hindu sects. This then is one of Sankara's chief claims on our admiration. There have indeed been reformers since his time some of them working in a wider sphere like Kabir and Nanak who sought to unite in harmony even the Hindus and the Muhammadans but so far as toleration and breadth of view are concerned within the pale of Hinduism itself subsequent movements must be called retrograde.

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now has admirers in lands of which he could never have even dreamt. His philosophy is being subjected to the usual processes of comparison and criticism, wherever its study has been earnestly taken up. It can continue to stand the tests of thought and time in future, as it has done in the past; there is certainly a bright prospect before it. If, however, at any future date the human mind outgrows the limits of Sankara's philosophy, mankind will sorely value it even then as a substantial contribution leading to the infinite growth of knowledge of which the *Sruti* sings *Vedatā Itē Anantatā Vedah*. All true and noble work in the building up of progress and civilisation is of this nature and as the tower rises higher and higher, the lower levels thereof become the inevitable supports of the higher elevation, and the lower they are, the greater is the weight of the superincumbent edifice that rests on them.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SANKARACHARYA

BY

PANDIT SITANATH TATTVABUSHAN

1 SANKARA APPEALS TO REASON NOT TO MERE AUTHORITY

LEAVING aside more exact definitions of philosophy definitions which are not likely to be intelligible to the ordinary unphilosophical reader we may define Philosophy for our present purpose as a reasoned theory of the Universe a theory that endeavours to explain the mutual relations of Nature Man and God Philosophy most at the least be such a theory whatever else it may be Now do the writings of Sankaracharya really contain a philosophy in this sense of the terms? We ask this question at the very outset because such a question is often asked by the superficial reader of Sankara's writings and answered in the negative Such a reader sees that Sankara ever and anon speaks of himself as a mere expounder of the utterances of ancient sages of India—the *rishtis* of the *Upanishads* the composer of the Vedanta aphorisms and the author of the *Bhagavad Gita* At almost every step he appeals to the Vedas as the ultimate authority on matters spiritual and seems to deny that man can know God by guided Reason In his commentary on the sixth *anuvak* of the *Brahmananda Valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* he distinctly says 'The *Sruti* is our source of knowledge in matters transcending the senses A reader of the class

mentioned above may, therefore, naturally conclude that Sankara's system is not a philosophy in any proper sense of the term. But a careful reader of his writings will observe, that, notwithstanding Sankara's great regard for scriptural authority, and his anxiety to show that his system is based on such authority, unlike the systems of the Sankhyas and the Naiyayikas, which he characterises as unscriptural, he reasons a good deal and defends all his leading doctrines by arguments addressed to the understanding of his readers. It is also seen that what he calls *Sruti* or Revelation is nothing but spiritual insight and experience and that by setting up the Vedas as our authority on spiritual matters, he means nothing more than this, that recorded experiences of the *rishis* turn our eyes inward and thus help us to see with the eyes of the spirit, the Supreme Self in which all souls and all things rest. His appeal to Scripture is not as to an external authority to be blindly received, but as to a valuable help in the attainment of true wisdom—wisdom which is attained by every qualified seeker after truth. As he says in his commentary on the *Prasnopanishad*, VI. 2—"The use of a Scriptural text is not to alter existing things, but to make them appear as they are." Again, at the end of his commentary on the tenth *anuvak* of the 'Siksha Valli' of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, he says: "Thus is it shown that the visions of the *rishis* concerning the soul and such other matters, manifests themselves to one who is devoted to the constant duties prescribed by the *Srutis* and the *Smritis*, who is unselfish and who seeks to know the Supreme Brahman." By what actual arguments Sankara establishes the different tenets of his philosophy, we shall see as we proceed.

2 SELF INTUITION PRIMARY AND BASIS OF ALL OTHER KNOWLEDGE

Sankara's commentary on the *Upanishads* the *Vedanta Sūtras* and *Bhagavad Gita* are the most important of his works and are the only ones that can without doubt be ascribed to him. These writings as a matter of course follow no system or if any only that which the original works commented upon follow. This is one reason why the ordinary reader cannot understand Sankara. To make him intelligible the main doctrines of his philosophy must be set down in something like a logical order and the arguments adduced by him in defence of each also set forth. We shall try something like this in the present account of his philosophy. We invite the reader therefore first of all to grasp the very fundamental principle of Sankara's system—the primary nature of self intuition (*asmātpratyakṣa* or *ahampratyakṣa*). In his commentary on the seventh aphorism of the third *pāda* second chapter of the *Sārīrka Mīmāṃsā* he says. The self is not contingent in the case of any person for it is self evident. The self is not established by proofs of the existence of the self. Later on he says. Nor is it possible to deny such a reality for it is the very essence to him who would deny it. He then proceeds to show that this primary and self evident intuition of self is the basis of all other kinds of knowledge whether perceptive or inferential direct or indirect present past or future. That is to say we cannot know any object without knowing ourself as the knower. As to the necessity or self evident character of the proposition. I know myself in knowing any thing else anyone may convince himself of this by trying to think its opposite which will be found to be not only unthinkable but actually

self contradictory. Thus if it seems to the reader that, while reading this book with deep attention he really forgets himself, he will find on actual examination, that the proposition is really unthinkable and even absurd. He will see that, if such a thing were possible, if he could really forget himself in reading this book, if he could, in other words know it not of conscious relation to himself, it would not be possible afterwards to bring the object in relation to his consciousness as he will actually do. Perhaps he will say that at one moment he actually knows the book that he sees or reads it without knowing himself as the seer or reader, that is without knowing that it is he who sees or reads it, but that at another moment he remembers that it was really he who read the book. But how is it possible for anyone to remember anything without actually knowing it? Remembering is recognition—knowing again—and there can be no recognition without cognition. To say, therefore, that one remembers anything without knowing it, is to say that one knows it without knowing it, which is absurd. If in the present case the reader says that he reads this book or any part of it without knowing his self as its reader, and then, at another time he remembers himself as its reader he is really guilty of self contradiction. Sanhara's contention, therefore that the knowledge of self is the constant basis of all other knowledge is quite evident.

3 THE WORLD RELATIVE KNOWLEDGE

We now proceed to explain another cardinal doctrine of Sanhara's philosophy,—the relativity of the world-to-knowledge. The ordinary unreflective reader has no suspicion of this relativity. To him the world exists whether anyone knows it or not. He constantly thinks and speaks of visible objects as existing unseen, audible objects

as unheard, tangible things as untouched and intelligible facts as unrelated to any understanding. He never suspects that such conceptions are self contradictory and that the existence of an object necessarily implies the existence of a subject or knowing self in relation to whose knowledge it exists. If as we have seen we cannot know objects without knowing the self as its knower it follows that we cannot think of any object without thinking of the same self as its knower and if we must believe objects to exist exactly as they are known and thought of—and we cannot do otherwise—we must believe them existing as known object of a knowing self. In other words since we know objects as seen heard smelt tasted touched or understood—as in some way or other related to the knowing self—and can think of them only as so related—therefore to believe them as existing out of this relation is really to believe that things seen exist unseen things heard exist unheard and so on, which is believing in contradictions as palpable as any can be. So Sankara says in his commentary on the *Prasnopanishad* VI 2

It cannot be said that there exists an object but it cannot be known. It is like saying that a visible object is seen but there is no eye. Where there is no knowledge there is no knowable. The fact is that in thinking of objects all whether they are reflective or nonreflective do think of a knowing self but that nonreflective people because of their inability to analyse their thoughts are not distinctly aware of this fundamental condition of all thought.

4 SELF THE ONLY REALITY KNOWN

Now from what has been said above it may seem that in knowing the world we know two distinct entities, namely, the self as the subject of knowledge and nature as the object

of knowledge—that though the existence of Nature implies its relation to a knowing self it is nevertheless a distinct reality and not identical with the self. But it will be seen on close examination that this distinction of Nature from the self is only apparent not real. Sankara shows this clearly in his commentary on the first *arural* of the *Brahmananda Valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. As he says there

Appearances such as sound though they present themselves as objects of self knowledge (and therefore as distinct from it) are yet found to be pervaded by self knowledge. The essence

of the self says he in the same commentary is knowledge which can never be parted from it. If then every object is found to be pervaded by knowledge the very essence of the self no object can be distinct from the self but is really comprehended in it. As a pleasure or a pain though verbally distinguishable from the self which feels it is really one with it so are colours tastes smells sounds and touches one with the self that perceives them though they are verbally distinguishable from it. In knowing the world therefore we know nothing but the self. The distinction of subject and object is only conventional—*rjara haritā*—Sankara calls it—and the result of ignorance—*avidya*—ignorance which is removed by true knowledge. In every act of knowledge we know one undivided entity—the self which is both subject and object because it knows only itself and nothing else or—as the distinction of subject is only conventional—which is neither subject nor object but transcends the distinction.

5 SPACE DOES NOT EFFECT DUALITY BETWEEN THE SELF AND THE WORLD

But our notion of the quality of subject and object of the self and the world is not

likely to be given up unless the source of this notion is traced and shown to be unreliable. Its source, then, is time and space, the idea of which regulates all our sensuous perception. We shall consider space first and see how it breaks up or rather seems to break up the fundamental unity of consciousness. Space not only brings in the distinction of one object from another, but also that of the self from the world. The self seems to be *here* in the body or in some particular object in the world *there* out of the self. But this distinction of *in* and *out*, *here* and *there*, as between the self with the body or some part of the body, and of forgetting that its essence is knowledge. As knowledge the self is not only here in a particular object but everywhere in all objects for as has already been seen it pervades or illumines everything it knows. As the *Kāthopanishad* II 1 10 says and Sankara fully endorses 'What is here is also there what is there is also here. He who sees duality in this goes from death to death'. Again as the *Chhandogya Upanishad* VII 15 1 says and Sankara concurs 'The self alone is below the self above the self behind the self before the self to the right, self to the left the self is all this'. The fact is that space as an object of knowledge is comprehended in the knowing self and cannot be out of it. The distinction of *here* and *there* *in* and *out* therefore cannot subsist as between the self and its objects. For the self there cannot be in the proper sense of the term, any external object or world. The notion of an external or material world therefore is purely conventional—*vyaākāṅkṣā*—and is rejected by true knowledge. Space which seems to make Universe dual or plural does not really do so. On the contrary, as a type of unity it supplies

Sankara with an illustration of the perfect oneness and indivisibility of the self. The distinction of *here* and *there* of *this* and *that* as between objects does not it will be seen split up space itself into parts. The space inside a pot may seem to be different from that outside of it but really there is no partition between the two. The walls or sides of the pot which seems to part the inside space from the outside are themselves in space and therefore cannot part space from space. Similarly the body which seems to separate the self from the world or the self in the body from the self in the world does not really do so for both the body and the world outside of it are illumined by the same self—are objects of the same knowing self—and are thus comprehended in its essence. The notion of duality therefore as furnished by space may be rejected as groundless. Objects which seem to come to us as aliens and as from a foreign source are really one with what we call *ourselves*.

6 KNOWLEDGE REALLY NON SENSUOUS UNCHANGABLE AND ETERNAL

But if it be so how is it it may be urged that objects do not always remain before or in the self but seem to appear to it and disappear from it. If they were one with the self would not they be ever present with it and the continual flux experienced in our perceptions be impossible? Sankara discusses the subject very fully in his introduction to the second chapter of the *Aitareya Upanishad* and as the result of a long discussion comes to the conclusion that the constant change apparent in our perceptions *does* not really imply any change in the knowledge of the self in which all things exist eternally—not indeed as objects distinguished from a subject for the self transcends this distinction—but in

perfect unity with it. Our perceptions seem to result from the contact of our organs of knowledge with objects external to them. But real knowledge as it is in the self, is not such a resultant. It is an eternal attribute of the self. In reality it neither arises from the action of external objects upon the senses nor is destroyed in the absence of such action. If it were so, says Sankara, there would not be such things as visions and sounds in the dreaming state when the organs of perception are inactive. Thus he says, "there are two kinds of vision that of the eye which is transient, and that of the self, which is eternal. Similarly also two kinds of hearing that of the ear, which is transient and that of the self which is eternal. Similarly two kinds of thought and knowledge, external and internal." That knowledge though seeming to be in a flux is really not so. It is a permanent property of the self, receives a striking illustration from the familiar but none the less wonderful fact of remembrance. The fact that things disappearing from the stream of changes that constitutes our sensuous life do yet reappear and are recognised as identical with things known before proves that knowledge is non-sensuous and does not depend for its existence on the changing and flowing form which it assumes in our perceptive life. Thus if the knowledge of the book before me were a mere event a change a perceptive act as it is called it would vanish for ever on the cessation of the other actions internal and external on which it seems to depend—my attention the action of light on the eye and the like. We should know nothing about it at any rate after a period of sound sleep when all perceptive action ceases. But we know as a fact that it will reappear to-morrow—reappear in relation

with the self that now forms its ground and cause and thereby prove itself as a permanent property of the self—as belonging to its very essence. It will prove that it was never absent from the knowledge of the self—knowledge which though different from senseless knowledge is none the less real than it but rather infinitely more so. Sankara says all this in effect in his refutation of the Buddhist Sensationalism (*Kshani* *Jaiyannaratada* in the second *pada* of the second chapter of the *Vedanta Sūtras*). One short quotation from that long discussion must suffice after all that we have said on the subject.

Unless there exists says Sankara one relating principle in the past present and future—one which is unchangeable and sees all things—the facts of remembrance recognition etc. which depend upon mental impressions requiring space time and occasional cause cannot be explained.

7 UNREALITY OF TIME SPACE AND THE FINITE SELF

It is clear then from what has been said above that in every act of knowledge we know only one Reality—that which we call our self—and that the objective world the world of time and space has no independent existence but is comprehended in the self. The self alone has *paramarthika* or real existence whereas the existence of the world is only *vyavaharika* practical or phenomenal. The belief in its independent or real existence is the result of *avidya* ignorance—ignorance which is removed by a true knowledge of reality. From the *paramarthika* standpoint there is no object as distinguished from the subject no world no space no time no action—therefore and no agent for action and agency depend no time. The argument for the unreality of space and time

which we have already given at some length may be briefly summarised as follows space is the distinction of *here* and *there* The distinction obtains only as long as the principle that relates or unifies *here* and *there* is not seen or in other words as long as objects in space are believed to be realities independent of the self When however *here* and *there* are both seen to be comprehended in the self—in that indivisible

agent in the act of knowing. When this distinction is seen to be unreal knowledge appears in its true character namely as the permanent essence of the self and not a passing act or quality. Then again as to the perfect onity of the self notwithstanding the fact that it appears different in different persons the fact is evident from what we have already said. It is time and space and their various modifications that seem to break up the Universe into various parts various spheres of knowledge and activity and thus into different selves in which they are related. With the merging of time and space in the self the idea of a plurality of selves is seen to be groundless. When the agencies that introduce finitude into reality are seen to be unreal finitude itself disappears and the Infinite alone remains. Thus is our own self the self in each of us which we ignorantly imagine to be finite seem to be really nothing but Brahman *satyamnanamanantam*—truth knowledge and infinite if by these adjectives we understand a Reality of which truth knowledge and infinitude are not separable attributes but form its very essence. In his commentary on the first *arvaka* of the *Brahmanada Valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* Sankara discusses these attributes of Brahman at great length and shows that the terms expressing them are applied to Brahman in a sense somewhat different from what they bear in their application to phenomenal objects. They are used in the case of Brahman not to describe him—for he cannot be described as description implies distinction and Brahman cannot be distinguished from anything other than he—but simply to indicate his nature as the only Reality self illumined self dependent indivisible and excluding even the possibility of any other reality. To the

attributes already enumerated is added *anandam* bliss not in the sense of the happiness experienced in obtaining a pleasurable object external to one's own self but such happiness as a non-dual secondless Reality can feel in the plenitude of its own nature

✓ BRAHMAN AS ISVARA

Having explained as fully as our limits allowed Sankara's idea of *paramarthika* existence we proceed to give a fuller statement than we have hitherto done of the *vyavaharika* world as conceived by him. We see already that he does not pronounce the world of sensible objects and finite selves as absolutely non-existent. Far from doing so he rather admits that in one sense that world is as real as Brahman for its real essence is one with Brahman—comprehended in Brahman's indivisible essence. Sankara is never tired of repeating the *Chhandogya* text *Satiam khalu idam Brahma*—Verily all this is Brahman. It is only the world's existence as conceived to be distinct from Brahman that is unreal according to him. Such a conception he says is based on ignorance and disappears on the attainment of true knowledge. Now the question is whence is this ignorance—this fruitful source of the infinite variety that constitutes this world? In reply Sankara has no hesitation in saying that this potent agency belongs to Brahman himself though in saying so he seems to contradict himself palpably. Is not Brahman as conceived by Sankara the very essence of knowledge? How then could there be ignorance in him even for a single moment? Is not Sankara's Brahman a non-agent (*niskriya*)? How then could any power or agency belong to him? We confess we find no clear answer to such questions in Sankara. His oft-repeated answer is that *avidya* is *anirvachaniya* not clearly describable

Maya and *Ivara* will be found explained at some length in his commentary on the fourteenth aphorism of the first *pada*, second chapter, of the *Vedānta Sūtras* besides other passages. We make no quotations as detached passages on the matter are not likely to convey any clear idea. The eternality and indestructibility of *Maya* will be found admitted in the commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* I 1 5 and II 1 9.

9 THE COSMIC AND THE COSMOS BONDAGE AND LIBERATION ✓

With the personality of Brahman at the top of the *vyavaharika* world, Sankara gives back all that he seems to have taken away by his process of merging everything finite in the Infinite. With the Creator he gives back the world created and sustained by him with all the finite objects and finite souls contained in it and he sharply criticises the Buddhist Sensationalists for denying their existence in the same manner in which he takes the Sankhya philosophers to task for their rejecting the most rational doctrine of an Intelligent Creator of the world in favour of their unintelligent *Prakriti*. At the head of all created beings he places the *Karya* of *Maya* Brahman the Effect God or Lower Brahman as distinguished from God as Cause or the Higher Supreme Brahman. He is otherwise called *Brāhma* or *Hiranyagarbha*. As objects can exist only in relation to God in distinction from a subject as changes imply a mind of which they are modifications, the objective world as a totality implies the existence of a Subject to which it is related—a Mind of which all cosmic changes are modifications. This Mind considers the world as its body, just as individual minds consider smaller aggregates of objects as their bodies. This Lower Brahman is *saguna* i.e. immanent in *sattvam* *rajas* and *tamas* the primary *gunas* or qualities.

of Nature and their innumerable modifications whereas the Supreme Brahman is *nirgunam* without the *gunas* i.e. transcending the qualities of Nature. Under Brahman not comprehended in his all pervading life are the various classes of individual beings such as gods, demons, men and the lower animals. All are indeed one with Brahman in essence but they appear finite and distinct from him in consequence of their identifying themselves with certain aggregates of objects which they consider as their bodies or limiting adjuncts (*upadhis*). These aggregates in the ascending order of their subtlety are the following five—(1) the vital sheath nutritive or material sheath (*annamaya kosha*) (2) the (*pranamaya kosha*) (3) the sensorial sheath (*manomaya kosha*) (4) the intellectual sheath (*vyomanmaya kosha*) and (5) the beatific sheath (*anandamaya kosha*). These aggregates are called sheaths (*koshas*) for they keep the real nature of the self hidden just as the sheath enclosing a sword keeps it hidden. The soul in the lowest stage of its spiritual development identifies itself with the body composed of gross matter in the next stage with vital powers then with the sensorium *manas* the seat of sensations then with the intellect or understanding the faculty that forms general conceptions and leads on to imagine ourselves as agents and subjects of knowledge and then ultimately with delightful feelings of all classes specially the higher. But when enlightenment dawns upon us we discover the truth that these aggregates as limited objects are not our real self and are not limiting adjuncts to it. Our real self we find is infinite and absolute—the Supreme Brahman himself. Our self identification with a limited object with all its sin and misery is our bondage while the consciousness of unity with Brahman with all the holiness and

blessedness pertaining to such consciousness is our identification with and liberation from them the reader will find treated in Sankara's commentary on the *Brahmananda Valli* and the *Bhriṅga Valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* .

10 INCARNATION UNIVERSAL AND SPECIAL

We now come to a consideration of the means proposed by Sankara for obtaining liberation and the processes through which according to him the soul obtains it. But before entering into a proper discussion of these subjects we shall briefly notice Sankara's view of incarnation both because it is an important doctrine of speculative philosophy and because it is closely connected with Sankara's view of ethical and spiritual life. It must be clear from what we have already said that Sankara holds a doctrine which may be called that of universal incarnation. Every so called finite is according to him an incarnation of the Deity inasmuch as the self we call our own is really the Supreme Self. It is only our ignorance that hides our identity with Brahman and this ignorance is quite removable by knowledge. When this ignorance is removed we realise the truth of the *mahavakyas* great utterances of the Vedanta—*So ham* (*Isopanishad* I)—I am He *Aham Brahmasmi* (*Brihadaranyaka* 1 4 10)—I am Brahman and *Tattvamasi* (*Chhandogya* vi 8)—Thou art That—utterances which Sankara is never tired of repeating. Nevertheless this identity of God and man however real and essential has to be discovered through a process in the case of the ordinary individual. The question now is is there or has there ever been any individual in whom the consciousness of identity with the Deity is eternal and not discoverable through a process? In other words has God ever incarnated himself—manifested himself as an

individual like ourselves with body, sensorium and understanding like ours? It is curious that Sankara has nowhere, in his writings discussed this question philosophically—setting forth the arguments in favour of and against this doctrine of special incarnation. But it is evident from several passages in his works specially from the introduction to his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* that he accepts the popular doctrine of Sri Krishna, son of Devaki being the incarnation of the Deity in a special sense. But in the particular passage referred to, he uses a word which seems considerably to differentiate his view. He says that in Devaki no mother and from Vasuddeva as father, the Creator '*Amisena Krishna Jala sambhava*—was born in part as Krishna. One can see very well why Sankara used the word *amisena*, in part in speaking of the Lord's incarnation. Incarnation is manifestation in flesh and other mediums like the sensorium and the understanding which are finite things. Now, the manifestation of the Self through finite things cannot but be partial and so Sri Krishna, however superior he may have been to ordinary mortals would yet seem to have been a finite being so far as his manifested or perceptive life was concerned. But if it be so it is not easy to see what difference in kind exists between him and other individuals. Sankara however, never distinctly makes the admission to which he seems to be committed and excepting the reservation implied in the word *amisena*, everywhere speaks of Sri Krishna as the incarnation of the Lord in a special sense. It may be mentioned by the way that the doctrine of special incarnation is absent from the *Upanishads*—the twelve that form the basis of the Vedanta Philosophy—and from the *Vedanta Sutras*.

11 ADMISSIONS INCONSISTENT WITH ABSOLUTE MONISM

However, Sankara's acceptance of the doctrine of special incarnation commits him to two very important admissions,—admissions which seem to conflict with the general drift of his philosophy. The first is that the state of absolute liberation does not imply an utter annihilation of difference, in that state also as in the state of bondage, there is a recognition of the plurality that constitutes the world,—only that recognition is coupled with the consciousness that plurality is *mayik*, the result of the Lord's mysterious power of creation. To Sri Krishna himself, the incarnation of the eternally free Lord moving among the Kuros and the Pandavas, driving the chariot of his friend and pupil in the battle field, and instructing him in the supreme science of liberation, there is evidently a distinct recognition of all the differences that constitute the phenomenal world including his own distinction, as the Universal Self, from other persons as finite individuals. We shall see hereafter how far Sankara keeps this admission in view in his distinction of *larma* or *apekshiki mukti* (gradual or relative liberation and *para* or absolute liberation. The second admission referred to above is that even liberated—absolutely liberated—souls may reincarnate themselves not indeed under the influence of desires or the result of past actions for all desires and fruits of actions are dead in their case, but for the object of doing good to the world—liberating those who are still in bondage. This admission also Sankara seems now and again to nullify by his doctrine of the final merging of individual souls in Brahman and that of the essential apposition of *larma* (action) and liberation.

12 THE FOUR GATIS OR DESTINIES THE OPPOSITION OF JNANA AND KARMA

We come therefore to a consideration of Sankara's view of *karma*. According to him there are four stages of spiritual progress and accordingly, as one occupies one or another of these stages at the time of one's death he obtains one or another of four corresponding *gatis* fates or conditions in the period following his departure from the world. In his commentary on the *Chhandogya Upanishad* V 10 *Brihadara* *nayala* VI 2 and elsewhere he speaks of these four stages and the fates to which they lead. The lowest is that in which man—and what is said of man applies to other orders of beings also—does not subject himself to any Vedic discipline but lives a life of pure impulse unchecked by any higher law. Such men when they die are reborn in the form of some lower animal such as a fly or an insect. The next higher stage is that in which man performs the duties prescribed in the *Śrutis* and the *Smritis* but acquires no knowledge regarding the gods he worships. The highest reward allotted to this stage is the attainment of the lower regions through the way called the *pitrāna*—the path of the manes—and the enjoyment for a time of the joys provided there. When these are over with exhaustion of the enjoyer's *punya* or merit—which however great is nevertheless a perishable thing—he comes down and is reborn. The third higher stage is that in which the performer of *karma* prescribed in the Scriptures adds to his virtuous deeds a knowledge of the deities worshipped by him. The deities spoken of in this connection do not include the Supreme Deity the Highest Brahman. The highest god known in this stage is the *Apara Brahman* or *Hiranyagarbha*. He is known and worshipped as distinct from the worshipper

at least in some respects and it is the consciousness of his distinction from the object of his worship that makes it possible for him to worship it and to seek his own good in various finite shapes by sacrifices to the gods and the performances of other duties prescribed in the Scriptures. The highest reward assigned to this stage is the attainment of the Divine regions—*Brahmaloka*—through the *devayana* or the path of the gods. When this world has once been attained there is no return from it to lower worlds. The soul lives there for ages in the company of the gods and in close proximity to the Lower Brahman and when this Brahman himself is merged in the Highest Brahman at the end of the cycle (*kalpa*) his worshippers also share in his happy fate*. This process of obtaining liberation is called by Sankara *larjja mul'ti*—gradual liberation. As the attainment of the *Brahmaloka* is itself called *mul'ti* in the *Sutras* and the *Sutras* Sankara calls this state *ape'shika mul'ti*—relative liberation. We see then how far according to Sankara *kar'ya aloka*—the mere performance of prescribed duties—on the one hand and *larjja* coupled with *ajara vidya* the lower knowledge of the gods—on the other can take us. Beyond all such finite forms of personal good (*purushastha*) lies *para mul'ti* absolute liberation which consists in perfect union with the Supreme Being without a single shade of difference. This can be secured only by the *para vidya jnana*—the knowledge of one's perfect identity with Para Brahman. When this knowledge is acquired the soul is in no need of making a journey through the *devayana* to the *Brahmaloka*. It becomes *jnan mukta* liberated though living in the world and is at death completely merged

* See Sankara's commentary on the *Prashnopanishad* II 5 and that on the *Vedanta Sutras* IV 3

to Brahman. The *jñāna* which secures *jīvan mukti* is according to Sankara incompatible with *karma* of all sorts. Such *jñāna* shows the identity of the self with the Supreme Brahman who is as we have already seen a non-agent *akarta* and is above all needs and therefore all desires. How can one who knows oneself to be the externally complete Brahman have any motive for action? Hence Sankara fights a long and interminable battle against *Samuelchayarada* the the doctrine of the union of *jñāna* and *karma*. According to the upholders of this doctrine both knowledge and action are necessary for liberation and even those who have attained the highest knowledge should perform the duties prescribed in the Scriptures though without any selfish desires. The life of a householder therefore is not according to these theorists incompatible with the highest knowledge. Sankara admits that the performance of the duties prescribed in the Scriptures is necessary for purifying the heart and that unless the heart is purified the highest knowledge cannot be attained. But he thinks that when the necessary purification of the heart has taken place and the highest knowledge has arisen ceremonial and domestic duties that is *karma* in the proper sense becomes unnecessary and the only duties that remain then are those that ripen and strengthen the knowledge of Brahman. Of this latter class of duties we shall give Sankara's views further on. Against the former and against the life of a householder which is based on them Sankara speaks everywhere throughout his writings. But we may refer to two particular passages as containing a summary of his views on the subject. His refutation of *Samuelchayarada* will be found specially in his commentary on the eleventh verse of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* which is really

the opening note of the commentary, coming immediately after the introduction. His advocacy of *sannyasa*, the ascetic's life as the only one compatible with the highest knowledge, and his tirade against the householder's life as inconsistent with the knowledge of Brahman, will be found specially in his introduction to the commentary on the *Aitareya Upanishad*. In the first mentioned commentary, however, he makes an admission which seems to be a virtual surrender of his position. Herein he says that the performance of a *lshatriya's* duties by Sri Krishna the incarnation of the Lord, for the good of the world, and of ceremonial and domestic duties by Janaka and other householders who had gained the highest knowledge with the same object, was not such *karma* as he (Sankara) teaches to be incompatible with the highest knowledge. The absence of desire (*kama*) and egotism (*ahankara*) in such actions takes them away from the category of *karma* properly so called. After this concession very little if any, difference remains between Sankara's position and that of the *Samuchchaya*adin, specially if the latter accepts in their entirety the teachings of the *Gita* on disinterested action (*nishkama karma*).

13 REINCARNATION RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE LIBERATION

We must return however to the four different *gatis* or destinies to which in the opinion of Sankara, the soul becomes subject according to its behaviour on earth. All of them it will be seen imply a belief in reincarnation. Sankara offers no regular philosophical defence of the tenet of reincarnation, though it is easy to see from his writings what arguments he would have adduced in favour of the doctrine if he had been called upon to argue it out. We therefore attempt neither any defence nor any criticism of the theory. The reader, if

he feels any curiosity about it may consult the section on 'Reincarnation' in the present writer's treatise on *Hindu Theism* where he will find the doctrine defended at some length with arguments both old and new. For our present purpose it will be sufficient to say that there is nothing *prima facie* irrational and therefore philosophical in the ideal of reincarnation. The immortality of the soul being admitted the next question is whether an embodied or a disembodied existence is the more probable form of the soul's continuance in after life a question the settlement of which will depend upon the weight of arguments on either side. But the same rationality can scarcely be urged in favour of Sankara's doctrine that souls not subject to any discipline in this life will be reborn in the shape of some lower animal. The conception of such a destiny for a human being seems to ignore the vast difference between the human consciousness and that of the lower animals. Even the most degraded of human beings seem to be incomparably superior to the lower animals and though a process of progression by which higher orders of beings are developed out of the lower is a rational idea defensible both scientifically and philosophically, a reverse process of retrogression seems opposed to both science and philosophy. The first of the four *gatis* spoken of by Sankara thus seem to be philosophically indefensible. Coming now to the second and the third the soul's passage to the *Pitrloka* and the *Brahmaloka* we must say that these doctrines scarcely come under the category of philosophical since they are not defended by arguments but are put forward as interpretations of Scriptural texts. There is indeed nothing intrinsically irrational in the idea of an abode of the virtuous like the *Pitrloka* though there seems to be something mechanical in that of one's merit being

exhausted there in time and necessitating a fall and rebirth. There is also, nothing unreasonable, in itself, in the idea of a world occupied by the higher gods, that is of the most wise and holy of finite beings, where the Divine presence, though pervading the whole universe is felt most vividly, and imparts a blessedness which cannot be enjoyed anywhere else. But nevertheless Sankara's teachings about such a world and the way by which the soul reaches it rest on no better or higher authority than the utterances of the Scriptures and must be accepted or rejected according to the light in which we regard these authorities. It may also be doubted whether Scriptural teaching on this subject is at all to be taken in a literal sense—as treating of an actual world and an actual way—or is altogether figurative—representing a spiritual condition as a world, and a process of spiritual progress as a way. A careful study of the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* Chapter I, *Chhandogya*, IV, 15 and *Brihadaranyaka* VI, 2-15, which contain accounts of the *Brahmaloka* its contents, and the way to it, does really suggest such a doubt. Sankara, however, and the other interpreters of the *Sutras* including the author of the *Vedanta Sūtras*, interpret these descriptions as realistic. But there is a curious difference among these interpreters as to one important point a consideration of which will lead us to the discussion of the fourth *gati* spoken of by Sankara namely the union of the soul with the Supreme Brahman, which is the only one that admits of philosophical discussion in the proper sense of the term. The difference referred to is whether the Brahman approached by the *devayana* is the higher or the lower Brahman. Two ancient interpreters of the Scriptures, Jaimini and Badari take opposite sides. According to the former, it is the higher Brahman that is reached by the way, according to the latter

it is the lower. The difference is not a mere difference of textual interpretation, it leads to important philosophical differences and hence our taking it up in this book. The author of the *Sutras* simply mentions the views of the ancient interpreters with their arguments side by side, but does not clearly take any side. Sankara, however, thinks that he takes Badaria's side, whereas Ramanuja the great Valabhnava philosopher, and a great opponent of Sankara's philosophy, interprets the author of the *Sutras* as in favour of Jaimini's view. It would perhaps be preposterous for us to take any side when such great authorities find reason to differ nor is it necessary for us to do so. The fact, however, is that the soul's union with Brahman in the *Brahmaloka* which is described in the scriptural passages already referred to and in the last three *padas* of the fourth Chapter of the *Vedanta Sutras* is a union with several points of difference. The soul sees its essential unity with Brahman, but neither obtains all the powers of the Deity nor is completely merged in it. The author of the *Sutras* distinctly calls this condition liberation, and the Valabhnava philosophers hold it to be the highest condition attainable by a finite being. Hence also they interpret it as union with the highest Brahman between whom and a finite being there must always exist as they teach, some points of difference. But Sankara thinks that as Para Brahman is above all difference, the soul's union with him must be a condition without shadow of difference (*bheda*) in it and he finds scriptural authority for such a condition in such passages as the seventh verse fourth section fourth chapter of the *Brihadaran yaka Upanishad*. It is not easy to conceive what Sankara precisely means by such a condition. His oft repeated characterisation of it as one without the least vestige of difference would

seem to make it incompatible even with the consciousness that all differences are *mayik*, or phenomenal. But if we were to interpret it in the light of admissions as to the eternality and indestructibility of *Maya* or the principle of difference, and as to Sri Krishna, the Lord's incarnation, and liberated souls working for good of the world, and thus being conscious of phenomenal differences, then we should have to conceive even absolute liberation as admitting of a sort of differentiation—though it were a differentiation very dissimilar to that which the soul conceives under the influence of *avidya*. Notwithstanding the difficulty of an exact interpretation of Sankara on the point, we lean towards the view that it is the latter kind of differentiation, and not the former, that he is careful of excluding from his conception of absolute liberation. However, the absolutely liberated soul does not, according to Sankara, need to go anywhere in particular and through any way, to obtain its highest condition. It becomes the Supreme Brahman himself who is in space and time or—what is really the same thing,—beyond all space and time. It becomes so even while living in the body. But Sankara makes a difference as will be seen from his interpretation of the texts referred to above, between having a body and being freed from it and seems to think that liberation is not quite complete till the body is dissolved. This distinction, again seems to conflict with his definition of liberation as the attainment of the highest knowledge—which can have nothing to do with the dissolution of a physical organism—and with the admission that the incarnation of the eternally free Lord and other liberated souls lived and moved in bodies without the least prejudice to their freedom.

14 BHAKTI OR REVERENTIAL LOVE TO GOD

We have seen now what place Sankara gives to *jñāna* and *karma* in spiritual culture. It remains to be seen what he conceives to be the function of *bhakti*, the reverential love of God, is the attainment of liberation. His commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* where *bhakti* is extolled now and again leaves no doubt as to the high place it occupies in his system. In the *Vaṭachudamani*, a beautiful treatise ascribed to him, he says: "Of the things which help the attainment of liberation *bhakti* is the greatest — *Mokṣālarāṇa sanyagryam bhaktirera garīyasī*." But it must be clear both from the verse quoted and from the foregoing exposition of Sankara's view that *bhakti* is in the popular sense as a feeling of reverence for a being conceived as higher than the soul of the devotee can be regarded only as a help, a stepping stone to liberation in a system of Absolute Monism like Sankara's. And this is exactly the light in which Śrīhara regards it: it is a means, not the end — a lower and not the final stage in the soul's progress. But there are passages in the *Bhagavad Gita*, for instance verses 51 and 52 of the eighteenth chapter where the final stage of spiritual progress is described and yet *bhakti* finds a place there. How does Sankara interpret such passages? In such passages he simply takes *bhakti* as identical with *jñāna* and he finds scriptural authority for so regarding it. In chapter VII verse 16 of the *Gita* Śrī Krishna speaks of four classes of worshippers and by implication of four species of *bhakti* and gives superiority to that which is identical with or based on *jñāna*. *Jñāna* to Sankara is the knowledge of the soul's identity with Brahman, the highest form of *bhakti*, therefore is the most constant and vivid consciousness of such identity. The

commentary on the *Chhandogya Upanishad* the greater portion of which is taken up with various kinds of devotional exercises. These Sankara divides into two broad classes (1) those which are closely related to Vedic ceremonies and gradually lead the mind to higher exercises and (2) those which through the contemplation of Brahman in relation to the objects of Nature both gross and subtle leads us to a knowledge of him as transcendent—to that highest form of knowledge in which all distinctions of subject and object of action agent and the result of action are merged in one infinite indivisible Entity

16 CONCLUSION

We take leave here of our great philosopher. Our object has been to expound rather than criticise his system. But we have suggested certain difficulties in it—such as no systems ancient or modern are entirely free from. Probably no ancient system will quite suit the modern mind. But we may perhaps be allowed to hazard the opinion that of all ancient systems that of Sankaracharya will be found to be the most congenial and the most easy of acceptance to the modern Indian mind.

SANKARA'S PHILOSOPHY OF SAMSARA*

BI

MR S VENKATARAMANAN

Man says Sankara is like a plant. He grows, flourishes and at the end he dies but not totally. For as the plant, when dying leaves behind it the seed, of which, according to its quality, a new plant grows so man, when dying leaves his *karma* the good and bad works of his life after this. No life can be the first, for it is the fruit of previous actions nor the last for its actions must be expiated in a next following life. So the Samsara is without beginning and without end and the new creation of the world after every absorption into Brahman is a moral necessity.—Dr Poul Deussen on "the Philosophy of the Vedanta."

SAMSARA or phenomenal existence whose main factor is the bondage of births and deaths in success is unreal and is the result of illusion—the ignorance by which the only and absolute reality, the Supreme Self is mistaken for the noreal world, in the same way as a rope may be mistaken for a serpent in the dusk of the evening. Both bondage and liberation are thus illusory, for, since there is no real bondage at all, how can there be a liberation from it? Yet liberation or *moksha* is relatively spoken of and can only result from a thorough knowledge of the reality behind and beyond and underneath and within the unreal. Sankara emphasises the fact that such knowledge is not a mere theoretical one which can be gathered from books or lectures but is of the nature of direct realisation.

*From the Introduction to Select Works of Sankara charya Sanskrit Text and English Translation Translated by S Venkataramanam Price Rs 2 G A Natesan & Co, Madras

or actual experience. The sole source of this knowledge is a clear and accurate understanding of the Vedic text. That thou art, but however much one may analyse its meaning by means of his own reason or with the aid of commentaries, the direct realisation of the self cannot take place unless the Vedic text in question reaches the student through the mouth of a spiritual teacher (the *guru*). It is then and only then that the disciple realises in a flash as it were

I am Brahman. The individual soul is seen at all times and in all conditions to be identical with the Supreme Self and the knowledge springs up that all this is indeed the Self and there is naught but the Self. This is the highest goal of spiritual endeavour, the *moksha* or liberation of the Vedanta philosophy. Further detail would be out of place in a short preface of this kind, but the translator feels bound to call attention to one very prominent teaching of Saekara which will be evident from a perusal of the present publication—namely that devotion to a personal God (*Saguna Brahman*) is not inconsistent with the true Vedanta philosophy, but on the other hand spiritual perfection or liberation is impossible without the grace of God attainable by devotion and the grace of the Master (*guru*) who alone can reveal the true nature of the Self to the ardent aspirant for the Absolute that is beyond all word and thought.

SRI RAMANUJACHARYA - HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

DR S KRISHNASWAMI AYYANGAR, M A , M B A S

GENERAL CHARACTER OF SOUTH INDIAN HISTORY

TO the religious history of India, the contributions that the Southern half has had to make have been many. The South generally enjoyed more peaceful development and was long free from the convulsions that threw the North into confusion, and all the internal revolutions and external attacks sent out the pulse of the impact almost spent out to the South. This has been of great advantage and it is precisely in the dark ages of the North, that often intervened between brighter epochs, that the South sent out its light to redeem the darkness.

SOUTH INDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIONS IN INDIA

This general character of the history of the North of India from the first centuries of the Christian era onwards makes a continuous history impossible on certain lines while in the South during this period there has been a continuity of development amidst all the din and clag of war and dynastic revolutions. Our concern here is about the Vaishnava movement and this has had a continuous history almost from the beginning of the Christian era.

MIS IMPRESSIONS REGARDING RAMANUJA

There has been considerable mis impressions that the Vaishnava movement originated in Ramanuja and all those that claim to be Vaishnavas (not including the disciples of Madhwa who are Vaishnavas in a narrower sense) both in the North and the South can trace their particular

form of Vedānta not earlier than Rāmāṇja. On the basis of this misimpression theories have been built up time and again that the characteristic features of the special teachings of Rāmāṇja have been borrowed from Christianity. The latest exponent of this theory is Dr Grierson though he would make a considerable distinction between the Vaiṣṇavas of modern times and those of the older and perhaps set those of the North against the South. This no doubt is an error which arises from not giving due weight to the indebtedness of Rāmāṇja to those Tamil saints that had gone before him long ere he came into the world. The hypothesis would be untenable unless it could be proved that all these Tamil saints could be shown also to have visited the Christian shrine at Mylapore or elsewhere. Besides even from the point of view of Sanskrit Vaiṣṇavism it cannot be said to have been proven that the peculiar features of Rāmāṇja Vaiṣṇavism are not traceable in earlier works and teachers. Hence a life of Rāmāṇja based on historical material alone and free from the legends that have gathered round it as time wore off would be of great advantage to clear away the wrong impressions that prevail regarding his life and teaching.

THE SPECIAL PERIOD OF RĀMĀṆJA'S ADVENT

That Rāmāṇja should have appeared in the eleventh century is quite as much of the mission getting the man as the advent of Buddha in the sixth century before Christ. This century in the South of India was characterised by considerable religious ferment. It was then that each religious sect among the people felt the need for formulating a creed of its own and placing itself in a regularly organised religious body so as to be able to hold its own in the midst of the disintegrating influences that gained dominance in

society. That Ramannja appeared and did what is ascribed to him is just in the fitness of things, having regard to the circumstances of the times.

PREDECESSORS OF RAMANUJA

(a) THE ALVARS

There have been a succession of devotees called in Vaishnava parlance Alvares in contradistinction to a similar Saiva group called Adiyars. These two classes had considerable similarity with characteristic distinctions. They both laid stress on the doctrine of Bhakti as a means to the attainment of salvation, the one through Vishnu and the other through Siva. The Vaishnava tradition names twelve of the Alvares while the Saiva saints number sixty-three. The Tamil works of the former including a centum upon Ramanuja himself, constitute the Prabhandam 4,000, while those of the Saivas constitute a vaster collection of Teravams, etc.

The twelve Alvares are in the traditional order:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------|
| I | { | 1. Poygai Alvar. |
| | | 2. Bhutathu Alvar. |
| | | 3. Pey Alvar. |
| II | | 4. Tirumahsai Alvar. |
| III | { | 5. Nammalvar |
| | | 6. Madhurakavi Alvar. |
| IV | | 7. Kulashekharalvar. |
| V | { | 8. Periyalvar. |
| | | 9. Andal |
| VI | { | 10. Tondaradippodi Alvar. |
| | | 11. Tiruppanalvar. |
| | | 12. Tirumangai Alvar. |

The actual dates ascribed by the hagiologists to these Alvares would not bear scrutiny, but the order in which they are mentioned is sub-

stantially correct. In order of importance, Nammalvar stands first, and it is his work that has the distinctive appellation Tiruvoymoli—"the word of the month." They were all regarded by the generations that succeeded them as manifestations of divine wisdom to redeem the world from the perilous plights to which it had brought itself.

(b) THE ACHARYAS

The next group that followed, as the hagiologists would have us believe, in unbroken succession, is known as Acharyas (or preceptors) not so near to the divine, but still raised above the ordinary man of the world by much. This orthodox succession of apostles include six names before Ramannja, of which the two most important are Nathamuni and his grand-son Alavandar. The great-grand-son of this latter through one of his grand-daughters was Ramanuja.

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH OF RAMANUJA

While Alavandar was still in occupation of the apostolic seat of the Vaishnavas at Srirangam, one of his grand-sons requested permission of him to go and devote himself to the service of God on the Tirupathi Hill. The permission was graciously accorded and the young man went and settled there with his venerable father and two younger sisters. While there, two young men wishing to enter life as householders happened to go to the holy place and sought each the hand of one of the sisters. Of these two Asuri Kesava Bhattar of Sri Perumbuthur wedded the elder, while Kamalanayana Bhattar of Mallaimangalam accepted the younger of the girls. Of the first pair in course of time was born a boy (in 1017 A. D.) whom the maternal uncle named Lakshmana (otherwise Ramanuja or in Tamil, Ilaya Perumal.)

EARLY LIFE OF RAMANUJA

Of the childhood of Ramannja as of others in similar positions of life, very little is known. There appears to have been nothing extraordinary in his career except that he appears to have lost his father while young. He received the kind of education ordinarily given to boys of his class and age along with his cousin (mother's sister's son) Govinda Bhattar, as he was called. The two young men had advanced sufficiently to seek a teacher in the Vedanta to instruct them. They went to a teacher of reputation holding his classes in Conjeeveram and this change marks the turning point in the career of the young men.

RAMANUJA AND YADAVAPRAKASA

Under Yadavaprakasa then the two cousins—Ramannja and Govinda Bhattar—were both studying the Vedanta assiduously. The former made such progress and his great grandfather at Srirangam had heard such good reports of his remarkable advance, that he travelled all the way *incognito* to see the young man. This he did in the Deva Raja shrine at Conjeeveram. Gratified with the look of the young man, he went back hoping that he might soon transfer the mantle of office to the youth of great promise that he just saw. He did not wish to speak to Ramannja lest it should attract attention and disturb Ramannja's studies in any way. Ramannja went on with his studies yet awhile when he began to feel that at times Yadavaprakasa's interpretations of Vedic passages were not quite up to his satisfaction. On one occasion he even went the length of offering an explanation of his own which struck those about as more satisfactory than that of his master. This led to grave differences between master and disciple. Matters advanced a step farther when, at the invitation of the ruler of the place, Yadavaprakasa failed in an attempt at exercising

The princess was possessed and the spirit declined to move at Yadava's bidding. It would, however, go away if it were Ramannja's pleasure that it should. Ramannja was pleased to give the order and the ghost was raised. This made Yadava more jealous of his pupil and the crisis was reached when interpreting another Upanishad; Yadava again rendered the passage in a somewhat absurdly disrespectful manner. Ramannja showed positive disapproval of what he considered a purposeful distortion of the texts. Yadavaprakasa asked Ramannja to leave his academy, but was advised to get rid of Ramannja altogether.

ATTEMPT AT ASSASSINATION OF RAMANUJA

At the instigation of some of his disciples Yadava organised a pilgrimage to Benares, and Ramannja and his cousin were among the party. The latter having been more docile stood in high favour with his master and was in the secrets of the plot to assassinate Ramannja. It was arranged to kill him in the depths of the forests, perhaps not very far from Kanchi. Information of this was given to Ramannja in time and he escaped at dead of night, and journeyed back to Kanchi under the guidance of a kind hunter and huntress. At daybreak the latter asked for a little water and when Ramanuja got down a well to fetch her some, the pair disappeared. Ramanuja had not to travel much farther before he came in sight of the spires of the great temple at Kanchi.

RAMANUJA'S RETURN AFTER ESCAPE

Having reached Kanchi and intimated to his mother of what had happened and how he escaped death by divine intervention, he settled down as a householder at the instance of his mother, and devoted himself to the service of God Devaraja at Kanchi. Alavandar was drawing near his end in the meanwhile, and those about him despatched the

eldest among his disciples to go and bring Ramannja to Srirangam. Periyannambi, as this emissary was called, arrived at Kanchi and stood reciting one of the beautiful verses in praise of God (the Stotraratna) composed by his master Alavandar. Ramanuja's attention was drawn to his slokas (verses) in spite of his single-minded devotion to his preparation for the morning service. Turning round he asked the stranger who the composer of the piece was. Periyannambi answered it was his great master Alavandar. The next question was "necessarily, whether he could see him. "If you would go with me now," said Periyannambi, "I will take you to him." Ramannja hurried through his morning service and started with Periyannambi, having obtained permission of Devaraja for the journey.

RAMANUJA'S FIRST JOURNEY TO SRIRANGAM TO VISIT ALAVANDAR

They journeyed along till they reached the northern side of Srirangam when at a distance Ramanuja descried a group of men on the south bank of the Koleroon River. Approaching closer Periyannambi and his younger companion discovered that Alavandar was no more and the group consisted of his disciples who came there with the remains of the departed great one for its final disposal. Ramannja was taken close to the body to take a first and final look at the great master, when lo! he saw three out of the five fingers of the right hand folded. Struck with this, he enquired whether the defect was noticed in life and the answer came that the defect was not physical and was not noticed in life. On farther enquiry Ramannja was told that the master had three of his cherished objects unfulfilled, namely, an easily read and understood commentary upon the Brahmasutras the giving of the names of Parasara and Shadagopa to suitable persons that would make these names live among

the people Ramannja promised to see these fulfilled and the fingers straightened Ramanuja waited for the funeral ceremonies to be completed and returned to Kanchi to resume his duties of devotion to God

RETURN OF RAMANUJA TO KANCHI AND THE MISSION OF HIS FUTURE

Days having passed in his usual round of service Ramanuja felt that time was passing without any attempt on his part to perform what he had promised to do. Not knowing what exactly to do he appealed to the elderly priest of God Devaraja and wished that he might ascertain the divine will regarding his own future. Tiruklachchinambi as the priest was called gave not the will of God in the matter in the following sloka

Sreman param tatram aham matam ma
bhedaha prapattirnirapaya betohn

Navasyakicha smriti hiantyakale mokshaha,
mahapornaha sha aryaavaryaha

I am the supreme my conviction is distinction devotion is the unfailing cause of salvation conscious volition not essential release in the end, at present Periyannambi is the high preceptor

In these six phrases was Ramannja given the direction for his future work whether the actual direction came from within himself or from without or those about. He was to pin his faith to God and work out the qualified monistic system of Indian philosophy accepting Periyannambi for his initiation and teaching the doctrines of devotion to God whose self imposed duty it is to give salvation even without the conscious volition of the person wishing it. Ramannja felt the call and with the permission of Devaraja accorded through his priest he started towards Srirangam

RAMANUJA'S INITIATION UNDER PERIYANAMBI

He halted at Madharantalam to pay his homage of worship to the God Rama in the temple there on the tank bank; and while in the act, he saw Periyānambi who was on his way to Kanchi. They both enquired of each other the purpose of his journey and found that each had in a way come to the end of it. Ramanuja found the Guru (preceptor) he sought, while Periyānambi's object was to take Ramanuja to Srirangam. In fact, he had been sent on that special mission by the disciples of first degree of the late master Alavandar. At Ramanuja's importunate entreaty Nambi initiated him into the mysteries of the hidden lore of the Vedānta of those times, in the presence of God Rama in the temple. Both Nambi and Ramanuja returned to the Kanchi; master and disciple together lived there for some time. But their separation came soon and gave a turn to the whole career of Ramanuja.

CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO RAMANUJA'S RENUNCIATION

Nambi and Ramanuja took up lodgings together and the two families were living amicably together for some time. Ramanuja, however, does not appear to have been very happy in the choice of his wife. He did not find in her that ready sympathy and compliance to his own wishes he expected of her. On one occasion he had invited Tirukachchinambi to his house and the two were seated and conversed together for a while. When the former went away Ramanuja's wife quickly washed the seat occupied by him, the temple priest having been of a slightly inferior status in point of caste. Ramanuja felt aggrieved and overlooked this offence with an admonition. Again one morning while he was still by the accustomed

well preparing for the morning service at the temple, a poor man asked him for food. He directed him home with instructions to demand food of Ramannja's wife with the husband's permission. She said there was none available. The man returned intimating Ramannja of how he fared. Ramannja's enquiry on returning home proved that there was some food which might have been given to the person. Again he excused her. But the third offence proved the last straw, and was the most serious of all in Ramannja's estimation. Ramannja's wife and Periyannambi's both of them went to the same well to fetch water. It would appear that through the latter's carelessness some water from her vessel dropped into that of the other. This naturally led to some altercation in which the relative claims of the two families were rather too freely discussed by Ramannja's wife. The other lady reported the matter to her husband, who rather than offend the good man quietly broke up his establishment and returned to Srirangam.

RAMANUJA'S RENUNCIATION

Ramanuja soon found out the cause of Nambi's noceremooious departure and resolved that the time had come for separating from his wife. He took advantage of an invitation from his father-in-law to send his wife away and without further delay assumed the yellow robes of a *sannyasi* (he that has renounced the world). This step at once added to the rising reputation of Ramannja, and disciples began to gather round him. It was now that disciples first appeared round Yathiraja (king of hermits), as he came to be called. It was probably now also that the question assumed importance whether a *sannyasi* should be of the Ekadandi or Tridandi (single rod or triple rod, as the symbol of office).

The Vaishnava version has it that Yadavaprakasa his late master became a convert to Ramanuja under the name Govindayogi and wrote the work *Yatidharma Samuchchayam* (The enquiry into the rules of conduct of a hermit)

RAMANUJA SETTLES DOWN AT SRIRANGAM AND PREPARES HIMSELF TO FULFIL HIS MISSION

While Ramanuja was making progress in this manner the disciples of Alvandar at Srirangam wished to get him to live in their midst and occupy the seat of their late master which had remained unoccupied for lack of a suitable successor. This time they sent another of Alavandara's immediate disciples his own son by name Tiruvranganappernmal Aiyar. Ramanuja followed the Aiyar and settled down at Srirangam. It was now that he set about seriously to acquire the qualifications which alone would justify his accession to the high position to which he was looked upon by the public as the most worthy candidate. He had therefore to get himself initiated in every department of learning and philosophy which then constituted the Vaishnava lore. Periyapambal having become his *guru* (preceptor) in one part he had to seek initiation of Tirukottiyarnambal for another (manthrartham). He went six times in succession and on all these occasions the master was not satisfied with the earnestness of the disciple and declined to open his mind. Ramanuja in despondency thought of giving up the business when he was asked to try another time. He succeeded in inducing the great one to unlock his secrets after the customary promise not to publish except to a worthy disciple previously tried. Ramanuja agreed and found the secrets of such efficacy for salvation that he taught all about him what he learnt. The guru summoned the disciple to his presence and asked him how it was that he so flagrantly transgressed the injunctions of his master.

Ramanna begged to be prescribed the punishment and the *guru* replied that the punishment would be 'eternal hell' hereafter, but nothing here Ramanna replied, with characteristic beneficence, that he would gladly suffer 'hell' himself, if by so doing he was instrumental in ministering to the attainment of salvation to the suffering millions of humanity. The master appreciated the spirit of the disciple's transgression and said that the particular *dorsoṣa* (section of Vedānta) might hereafter be known as 'Ramanna Darsana'.

CONVERSION OF RAMANUJA'S COUSIN

At this period Ramanna had to intervene in the affairs of his cousin and companion at school—Govinda Bhattar. This young man had continued his journey along with Yadavaprakasa to the Ganges. It would appear that while he bathed in the holy waters of the river a 'pallid emblem' stuck to the palm of his hand. Hence the name Ullangai Gonarndanayanar. Ever since he had become a staunch Saivite and had taken residence at Kalabasti, not far from his maternal uncle at Tirupati. At Ramanna's request the uncle met the nephew and brought him back to allegiance to the Vaiṣṇava persuasion under the new sacerdotal designation of Embar. Ramanna's name had begun to attract attention and he felt that he should still acquire other qualifications before becoming every way the head of a *darsana*.

RAMANUJA COMPLETES HIS QUALIFICATIONS

He began his studies in Tiruvoytmoli first under Tiruvarangapperumal Aiyar and then under Tirumalaiyandan. While with the latter he had occasion to show his special acuteness of intellect in suggesting special interpretations of important texts which on further discussions were found to have been in full agreement with the views of Alavandar. This new acquisition completed his round of

qualifications and he had become in fact a successor of Alavandar in every sense of the term

A SECOND ATTEMPT ON RAMANUJA'S LIFE

Ramanuja's fame had spread so wide and he came to be known so well that his little cousin at Tirupathi (son of his maternal uncle) evinced a precocious desire to attach himself to Ramanuja. The father sent the boy in charge of a nephew of his own and the two arrived at Srirangam when Ramanuja's life had been saved by the unlooked for intervention of a good woman. Ramanuja as a *sannyasi* had to go round at mid day from house to house for food. One of the house holders had instructed his wife to poison the food and serve it to him. The woman felt compelled to obey the husband but on giving the handful to Ramanuja could not bear the feeling that the good man would die of the food. She, therefore prostrated before him while getting back into the house. It is recognised as a rule of practice that when a *sannyasi* goes out for alms (*biksha*) no one should make the usual salutation. This strange conduct on the part of the lady struck Ramanuja and he suspected foul play. On examination the poisoning was discovered and ever after it was arranged that the elder of the two new arrivals should undertake the food supply of Ramanuja. In spite of this attempt at assassination all had so far gone smoothly and the life of Ramanuja becomes stormy hereafter. His fame had spread far and the few prominent conversions attracted attention. Whether he wished it or not he had to make his position good against all comers and had to assume the role of a controversialist.

CONTROVERSY WITH YEGNAMURTHI

At this time there arrived at Srirangam an advaitic *sannyasi* by name Yegnamurti in the

course of a controversial tour through India. There began between the two a great disputation regarding the relative superiority of their respective creeds. For sixteen days they went on with no decisive result either way and Ramanuja was somewhat anxious about his own position, when it struck him that he might derive some help from Alavandar's works. He referred to the latter's *Mayavadakhandinam* (a refutation of the idealistic theory). Thus armed he overcame his adversary on the seventeenth day and as a result enlisted his rival among his followers under the Vaishnava designation of *Ainalapperumal Emberumanar*.

RAMANUJA'S FULFILMENT OF HIS FIRST PROMISE

Some time after Ramanujan felt that he might conveniently pay the long wished for visit to his uncle who sent word through his nephew that he very much wished to see him. Ramanuja then set forward to Tirupati, one of the three holy of holies of the Sri Vaishnavas. He stayed there a year receiving instruction in the *Ramajana* from his maternal uncle there who at the end of the period made over to him his two sons. His preparations were now complete and as he was growing old he set about fulfilling his undertaking to Alavandar. The first of his three promises was the writing out of such a commentary for the *Brahmasutras* as would embody the views of the qualified monistic school of thought. It was absolutely essential for a due performance of this work that he should acquaint himself with the previous commentators particularly of the *Bodhayana-vritti*. This naturally was not easy of acquisition for one of his intentions explicit and implied. He had to go about much before he found access to a library in the north containing the work where he was allowed just to read it through. He felt that it was

not enough when a quick disciple among his followers came to his rescue by saying that he had completely mastered the work and could give reference whenever wanted. This was one among his first disciples, who lived to render yet greater services to his master. With the help of Kurathalvar—for such was the name of this stout hearted and quick minded disciple—Ramanuja wrote out the three works—the essence of the Vedanta (Vedantasaram), a resume of the Vedanta (Vedanta Sangraham), the light of the Vedanta (Vedantadipam). He also wrote, or rather gave out, the commentaries on the Brahmasutra and Bhagavat Gita. This list of works redeemed Ramanuja from his first promise.

RAMANUJA SECURES THE APPROVAL OF THE LEARNED FOR HIS BHASHYA

But these must be accepted before Ramanuja could feel he had done his duty to his master. He had therefore, to start on a tour to different places to secure the approval of the learned. This tour naturally took him to the great seat of learning—Kashmir. There at Sarasvatipiti (the seat of learning) he read through the work in an assembly of philosophers and obtained from them the approval of no less an authority than "Sarasvati" herself. As a token of her approval she presented Ramanuja with the image of Hayagriva (horse necked) an aspect of Vishnu and said that his commentary might thereafter be known as Sri Bhashya (the commentary). It is because of this distinction that among his disciples Ramanuja is known as Bhashyakarar (maker of the Bhashya). The image of Hayagriva has come down to the present generation and is believed to be that which is the object of worship at the Parakala Mutt at Mysore.

RAMANUJA SETTLES A SAIVA VAISHNAVA DISPUTE AT TIRUPATHI

Returning from the North he had to pass by way of Tirupathi where matters had assumed a serious aspect on a dispute as to the nature of the deity there. The Saivas claimed the shrine to be that of God Subrahmanya while the Vaishnavas claimed it as that of Vishnu. The matter had therefore to be settled one way or the other and they agreed to leave the decision to the God himself. It was arranged that one evening both parties should assemble and look up the *sanctum sanctorum* having placed the weapons peculiar to each deity. The shrine was to be that of Vishnu or Siva according as the one set or the other was assumed by God. It was found the next morning that the image had assumed the disc and conch characteristic of Vishnu and ever after the shrine appears to have been taken to be that of Vishnu. Having settled this dispute Ramanuja returned to Srirangam and set about arranging matters for getting through the remaining items of work he had undertaken.

RAMANUJA FULFILLS THE SECOND DESIDERATUM-- SAHASRANAMA BHASHYA

Ramanuja's foremost disciple Kurathalvar was for long childless. One night it would appear he had to go to bed without food having had to fast the whole day for lack of provisions. The bell in the great temple pealed indicating that the night worship was going on. The devoted wife thought to herself that it was hardly fair that God Ranganatha should accept regular worship when the staunchest of his devotees lay starving. Soon after the temple priests brought a supply of food from the temple and knocked at the door of Kurathalvar. The wife opened the door and delighted with the arrival of food woke

up the restless husband and fed him. As the direct outcome of this divine favour she soon became mother of two sons to one of whom at the instance of Ramanuja the name Parasara was given. This boy had grown up to man's estate when Ramanuja was looking out for some one through whom he might fulfil the second object. This young man Parasara Bhatta was commissioned to write a commentary on the *Sahasranama* (the thousand names of Vishnu). This work of Parasara Bhatta fulfilled the second of the desiderata of Alavandar.

**PILLAN'S 6000 COMMENTARY ON THE TIRUVOYMOLI
FULFILMENT OF THE THIRD DESIDERATUM**

There then remained the means of perpetuating the name of Nammalvar, the author of the *Tiruvoymoli*. Ramanuja was perhaps thinking of a commentary himself. It would appear he was contemplating within a closed room a particular verse of the work attempting to realize its full significance when his cousin looked through a chink in the door. The young man Pillan by name forthwith put the question whether the master was pondering the verse referring to the God at Tirumalirunjola. Ramanuja was struck with the acuteness of the young man and commissioned him to write out the 6000 commentary on the *Tiruvoymoli* giving him the name Tirukkuruppiran Pillan, the first part of which being one of the many surnames of Nammalvar. This brought the third of Alavandar's desiderata to fulfilment. Ramanuja could now feel his mission at an end and settle down to a life of quiet teaching. This way perhaps years rolled by.

**THE CHOLA PERSECUTION AND ESCAPE OF
RAMANUJA**

He was not however altogether unmolested. Perhaps a change of ruler or a change in his

surroundings brought about a change in the spirit of complete tolerance that as a rule characterised the administration. Be the cause what it may the Chola ruler for the time being often given the name Kolottunga took it into his head to demand assent to the doctrine

Sivat parataram nasti There is no being (God) superior to Siva This seems to have been aimed particularly against the Ramanuja propagandists perhaps because of a few prominent conversions. This challenge was openly thrown out and naturally enough everybody pointed to Ramanuja as the person whose assent ought to be obtained. Ramanuja was summoned to appear in the royal presence.

Ramanuja's friends feared danger and to avoid it Kurathalvar undertook to personate Ramanuja. Assuming the robes of the *sannyasi* Kurathalvar went along with the venerable Periyasambal to the Chola Court while Ramanuja assuming the dress of a householder and at the head of a small body of adherents betook himself to the kingdom of the Hoysala. Bitti Deva *Travelling along the banks of the Kaveri* Ramanuja settled down at Saligram where he lived for a period of 12 years. While here Bitti Deva was just carving out for himself a kingdom along the southern marches of the Chalukya kingdom of Vikramaditya and the Chola frontier in the northwest.

CONVERSION OF BITTI DEVA

A daughter of the king was possessed and after failing in all other attempts at exorcism Ramanuja's aid was called in. Sure enough the ghost was raised and Bitti Deva agreed to become the disciple of Ramanuja. This could not however be without overcoming the Jains in controversy as the king is reputed to have

been a Jain Ramannja had the best of it in the disputation and the bulk of the Jains either embraced the Ramannja *darsana* or were ordered to be ground down in oil mills This latter threat however was not carried into effect through the intervention of Ramannja Ramannja returned to Saligram

DISCOVERY AND CONSECRATION OF THE MELUKOTE TEMPLE

It was while here that Ramannja's stock of *namam* (the white earth which serves for the Vaishnava caste mark on the forehead) ran out of stock and Ramannja was much concerned He dreamt over night that there was a hill of that material not far from Tondannur where he made the acquaintance of Bitti Deva Following the clue he obtained in his dream and through the good offices of Vitala Deva (Bitti Deva) Ramannja got the spot marked out in his dream dug up when lo! there appeared beneath a small shrine Ha then got it consecrated as Tirannarayana *pram* (Melukote of the maps) Thinking of a suitable image for this shrine he dreamt of the image of Ramapriya which was at Delhi in possession of the daughter of the ruler at the time He had to undertake a journey to Northern India again Having got possession of the image somewhat miraculously he returned with it As the princess proved inconsolable without her pet image the king (whoever he was) sent a party of men to bring back Ramannja who found shelter in a Panchama village It is out of gratitude for this protection that he ordained the admission of the latter into the temple on the car festival The consecration of the image and the completion of the temple are placed in 1021 Sala or 1099 A D which appears to antedate the event much He had to make good his position here again as against everybody else and held a successful

disputation against the Banddhas of Padmegiri (Srevana Belagole) He then resided at Tirunarama pparam expecting news from the South

RAMANUJA RETURNS TO SRIPANGAM

While Ramaonja was busy doing the important things detailed above Korathalvar and Periyannambi went to the Chola court in obedience to the royal summons. There the question was put to them whether they subscribed to the statement *Sivat Parataram Nasti*! Korathalvar subscribed with a reservation *Dronamasti Tatakaparam*. There is Drona above Siva ! taking Siva in the sense of a measure Drona being a bigger measure. For this impertinence the angry king ordered the putting out of the eyes of the two Vaishnavas. Periyannambi a venerable old man died on the way, but the sturdier Korathalvar nothing daunted returned and lived at Srirangam. After a time the Chola ruler died of a carbuncle which the Vaishnavas put down to be the result of the ruler's cruelty to the devoted adherents of Ramannuja. News of the death of the Chola ruler was taken to Ramannuja by the messenger whom he had sent to condole with Korathalvar in his misfortune. On receipt of this somewhat assuring news Ramannuja made up his mind to return.

ORGANISATION OF THE ADHYAIANOTSAVA AND THE COLLECTION OF THE PRABANDHA

Consoling his beneficent disciple as best as he could Ramannuja had to set about arranging matters for the *Adhayanotsava* (an annual festival for the recitation of the works of the Tamil Saints) for which it was the practice to fetch the image of Nammalvar from Alvar Tirunagari in the Tinnevely District. This having been a year of heavy rainfall it was found impossible to bring the image of the Alvar all the way. Ramannuja in consequence consecrated a shrine and restored the image of the Alvar in Srirangam itself so

that no similar difficulty might be experienced for the future. It was on the occasion of this festive celebration that one of the disciples of Karathalar dedicated the centum in honour of Ramanuja on the model of the decade of Madhura-kavi on Nammalvar. Amudan of Arangam, the author of the centum, it would appear, was the Smartha manager of the temple at Srirangam and had been not well-accommodating to the Vaishnava apostle or his disciples. When his old mother was drawing near her end, the son dotingly enquired if she desired anything he might do for her. She wished that either Ramanuja himself or one of his nominees might be invited to accept food of him on the occasion of her funeral ceremonies. Amudan had no alternative but to make the request of Ramanuja who advised that his lodomisthah disciple Karathalar might be asked. The latter accepted the invitation and demanded for satisfaction the keys of the temple which Amudan surrendered and became henceforward the disciple of Karathalar. This Amudan in his new born zeal composed the centum and begged hard that it might be accepted. Ramanuja accepted the dedication and permitted its inclusion in the prahandho 1000 of the earnest pleadings of his first disciples. Having made provision for the regular annual recital of this 1000 Ramanuja got images of the Alvars and Andal set up in Srirangam and other important places where also similar annual celebrations were ordained.

CONSECRATION OF THE GOVINDARAJA SHRINE AT TIRUPATHI

He then paid a visit to Alvar Tirunagari and on his return heard that his maternal uncle at Tirupathi was no more. He then repaired thither and got the funeral ceremonies duly performed by the elder of the two consins of his, the younger of whom he had long regarded as his son in apostolic

succession It was while he was yet here that he heard that the Govindaraja temple at Tirupath had been overthrown and the image cast into the sea He caused the image to be brought over and hoisted it in the temple at the foot of the sacred hill where again he caused to be set up the images of the Alvars and Andal as elsewhere

PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY PLACES

He then returned to Srirangam by way of Kanchi and Madhuranthakam He then went to Tirumalirajalai and Srivilliputtur to complete his round of pilgrimage to the sacred shrines of Vishnu in the South Having thus established his influence throughout South India and having organised and popularised the teachings of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta he could now think his mission was at an end

ARRANGEMENT OF THE SUCCESSION

He arranged for the continuance of his teaching by nominating seventy-four among the worthiest of his followers Of this number four had special custody of the Bhasya one among whom had the Prabhanda teaching also This one was no other than his cousin son Pillai who became the actual successor of Ramanuja

While he was preparing to depart this world he found the most indomitable among his companions anticipate him in this as well Having got his funeral rites duly performed Ramanuja felt himself quite at the end of his mission when again at the importunate entreaty of his disciples he had to permit three of his own representations consecrated and set up in Srirangam Sriperumbathur and Tirunavaimapuram This example had been followed later on and every Vishnu temple in the South has as a necessary adjunct a little shrine for Ramanuja

Consoling his sorrowing disciples and companions, Ramanuja felt the call and passed away quietly having completed his 120th year in this world

The above in brief, is an outline of the life of Ramanuja, as the most authoritative tradition has it. This tradition has an inevitable tendency to gather volume, as time passes, and there have been as many varieties of this biography as are found interested hagiologists. But this account relies particularly on two contemporary works which have special claims for our acceptance. Neither of them is a professed biography and both of them were written for the acceptance of contemporaries and one of them had been read before Ramanuja and obtained his imprimatur. This is the work of Amudan of Arangam and consists of one hundred stanzas in Tamil included in the Prabandha of the Tamil part of the Vaishnava lore. The other is the work of a disciple also, by name Vadnhanambi (or in Sanskrit Andhrapurana) perhaps because he was a Telugu man. This is called Yathiraja Vaibhavam and consists of 114 slokas. This work describes all that Ramanuja did in a way so free from exaggeration that it would strike one as being particularly reliable. The name of the author occurs among the 74 successors of first degree of Ramanuja and his obligation to the master is indicated in the sloka quoted hereunder

"Kamschid Kamsinschid arthe prathiniyatha
thaya sanniyojyautharangur thathra kshirartha
kritye pratiniyathamahu dasamapyathyavarham
Kurvan arimau yathissasvapathavinatha thathdasanu
dasam namapyathyauthabaktam avathithamiva sadha
gopayau sopi priyat." Having ordered his most
trusted disciples to accept particular offices,
Ramanuja 'who protected his worthy servant,
servant of his servants, entrusted with the

service of providing milk may be prosper. It now remains to examine historically what truth there is in the above account from available historical material and how far certain impressions that prevail regarding Ramanuja and his teachings find justification from his life and times.

Having recounted the incidents in the life of Ramanuja in the previous sections of the paper we shall now proceed to examine critically whether the main incidents of his life are what his disciples claim them to have been and whether recent research so far as it bears upon these lends any support to those as a whole. The following incidents will be examined seriatim as they appear to be arranged in chronological order —

1 Ramanuja's conversion of Yadavaprakasa his preceptor

2 His conversion of Yegumurti an Advaita Sannyasin

3 Settlement of the Smartha Vaishnava dispute about the God at Tirupathi

4 The Chola persecution of Ramanuja

5 The Hoysala Vishnuvardhana's conversion

6 Foundation of the temple at Tirumayana param (Melukote)

7 The conversion of Amudan of Arangam the author of Ramanuja Nandhadhi

8 The consecration of the Govinda temple at the foot of the Tirupathi Hill

For the purposes of this again we shall as far as possible have recourse to such works of reliable authority as those of Ramanuja's contemporaries and immediate successors only.

1 Yadavaprakasa was an advaitic teacher of reputation at Conjeevaram. He was also a writer of authority in his philosophy and in his days

end after he was a leader of a school of thought, that as the best representative of advaitic exposition Vedanta Desika quotes him and disputes his position. He is the reputed author of Yatidharma Samuchchayam and of the Yadava Nikendu according to others the two works are from separate persons. At any rate the Yadava of the former work is in all probability, the philosophical expounder of the advaitic system. In the face of these facts, it would appear impossible that he should have been the first convert to the teachings of his ex-disciple Ramanuja whom he did not love overmuch as a disciple. So it does not seem to me that I had long thought that the story was a pious fabrication. There is no reference in the Yatidharma Samuchchayam to his conversion at all. This is a work which undertakes to examine what the duties of a sannyasi are according to the best authority and he seems to hold that there is good authority for both classes of sannyasins—those with the sacred thread and tuft of hair on the head (the Vaishnava) and those without these adjuncts (the Saiva). Except a reference to the 'Prabhandas' in the invocatory verse and the invocation itself being addressed to Vishnu as Dattatrya the work is not committing in this particular. But the work Ramanuja's Nartanadharmam of Amudan of Arangam one of his own converts refers often to success in disputation against great controversialists but does not mention names though the references are such as would warrant the inference that they were in particular Yadava-prahasa and the sannyasin Yegnamurti (stanzas 58, 64 and 88). But in two works of Vedanta Desika coming just three generations after, or say about a century we have direct references to the purpose. The first half of verse 13 of Ethiraja Saptati refers to 'Srabhalat

Uddhrita Yadavaprakasa" (he that had uprooted with his own strength Yadavaprakasa) This need not necessarily mean conversion, but that such was actually the case is clearly stated in one of his other works, *Satadhasani** Vedanta Desika followed Ramanuja at an interval of three generations only and we might take him as a sufficient authority for the fact as he takes Yadava's opinions and seriously controverts them in other parts of his works

ii As to Yegnamurti's conversion we are not in a position to say anything as nothing more is known of him than the fact perhaps, of his having been a sannyasin (*Ekdhandi*)

iii The question about Tirupathi, is of far greater importance, the more so as there has recently been going on a lively controversy about the same subject in the columns of the journals and papers consequent on Mr Venkayya's reference to the temple having been Saivite in his official report It will be seen that the Vaishnava account has it that the God on the hill had just lent his characteristic weapons the disc and the conch to the Tondaman Chakravarti Let it be noted here in passing that this evidently refers to the conquest of Kalingam by Karnaakara Tondaman about 1111 A.D. Messrs. M. Narayanaswami Iyer, B.A., B.L. and T. A. Gopinatha Rao M.A. have both written concerning this in the *Seni Tamil* The former inclines to the Vaishnava view and the latter to the Saiva. The question therefore needs to be examined with care The following facts concerning the point appear to be agreed upon The Tevaram hymnists have not at all celebrated the shrine, the Vaishnava Alvars have

* I am obliged for this reference to Tarkathurtha Punditaratnam Kasturbaogachar of Mysore

The Tamil epic Silappadhikaram has explicitly given the temple a Vaishnava character and there is no possibility of mistake here. On this account, therefore Mr Gopinatha Rao would bring the Silappadhikaram after Poygai Alvar (whether he brings it also after Ramannja is not quite clear, though he shows a leaning to bring it to the middle of the 12th century). This gentleman holds that the original God was Subrahmanya as the place is called 'Ilangoil' and the God is referred to once or twice as 'Kumara' though not without other adjuncts. The latter is quite decisive according to him. So it would be, if the premises have been quite as they are represented to be. One fundamental defect here is the taking out of words without reference to their context. Mr Gopinatha Rao refers to the God being known as Balajee among the Northerners. This may be but Balajee is not exclusively applied to Subrahmanya, if applied to Him at all. I have here numbers of persons known as Balajee but the word stands of Balakrishna. This is equally sound there is something more. The early Alvars Poygai Alvar Bhotattar Pey Alvar, delight in referring to God in one of his aspects as a child either as Rama and Krishna preferably the latter. One has only to look through the writings of these to be convinced of this. Why they do so is beside the point. It is this Balakrishna—he is not so named in the work—that has given rise to the name Balajee*. Since Krishna as Vitoba is very popular in the Mahratta country. Anyhow this interpretation of Balajee is in keeping with the writings of the

* When last at Tirupathi I heard another version. When the Northerners first appeared at the shrine they were struck with the softly beautiful look of the image and exclaimed Bala (damsel). Hence the name Balajee as they say.

Alvars who had bestowed their best thoughts upon God's manifestation at Tirupathi. For Alvar lends the greatest support to this contention as to the nature of the deity. It will be seen that he refers to the same deity in the four different ways as above. They are of course to be taken synonymously. References 1 and 3 may be doubtful but the other two must be sought to help us in the interpretation. Reference 2 clearly indicates one of the acts of young Krishna and reference 4 though not equally clear is an achievement of Vishnu when Brahma was about to grant the boon sought of him by Ravana. If a more direct indication be needed the stanza 62 makes it clear to any unprejudiced mind. There are a number of places sacred to Vishnu and the names given are Valabnavito names e.g. Tiravarangam and Thirunadandal (Kamhankonam). There is thus nothing to bear out the contention that the God there was ever meant to be Subrahmanya. Stanza 68 of the same 3rd Tiruvandadi states clearly that the manifestation of God there is in the noted form of Siva and Vishnu. This is borne out by the stanzas 3 and 98 of the 1st Tiruvandadi. This would therefore make it clear that the God was of the Harihara type. Then the question arises why is it that Hango speaks of it as a Vishnu temple in such clear terms? The explanation perhaps would be that the temple had been known only as a Vishnu temple though there was the duplex character in the idol. This could be noticed only by a devotee who was in close touch with the temple which Hango could not pretend to have been. There would be nothing very strange about this if most people nowadays do not know it. Its established reputation as a Vishnu temple accounts for the omission of Tirupathi by the Nayanmars of the Saivites. How then was it that the Saivites laid claim to it in the days

of Ramanuja? Ramanuja's time was remarkable for the revival of the Prabandam which was being taught much more widely than before. Besides this Ramanuja's conversion must have made the Saivites alive to the danger of this Vaishnava neighbourhood. So on the old grounds of the dual form of the God they revived their claims particularly as the ruling sovereign was likely to lean to the Saiva side. Naturally enough Ramanuja appealed to a trial by ordeal of some sort. Ever after there appears to have been no dispute as to the character of the deity. This must have taken place some time after 1111 A.D. the probable date of the conquest of Kalingam.

iv The next item of importance in the life of Ramanuja is the Chola persecution. The Chola ruler at the time was Kulothunga the Chalukya Chola (1070—1118 A.D.). The Cholas were Saivas most of them but they were tolerant enough of other religions as well while some of them even went the length of endowing Vishnu temples. This Kulothunga does not appear to have been particularly narrow minded as he made a grant even to the Banddha settlement at Naga-patam. But as the Vaishnava account itself has it he was persuaded by others into compelling all to assent to the doctrine of the supremacy of Siva. This is not at all improbable considering that this was the period of great Saiva activity and the ruler was the special patron of Sekkilar. The general body of Vaishnavas do not appear to have been ill treated but Ramanuja's active work at Srirangam attracted attention and ended in the blinding of Kuratthalvar and the old preceptor of Ramanuja himself. This must have taken place about the nineties of the 11th century. And Ramanuja was compelled to leave the country. His immigration into the Mysore country brings us to the next important incident in his life.

v & vi He moved up the Kavery and settled at Saligram wherefrom he had been invited to the headquarters of Vithala Deva Raya or Bitti Deva. This latter could not have been the ruling sovereign at the time as his brother was alive to the end of the century and a few years later. During the last years of the century he was still active in the Gangavadi frontier and it was while here that he must have met Ramanuja. His elder brother had for his God Isa and this meant perhaps he was a Saiva. Bitti Deva was converted and he helped Ramanuja in the restoration of the temple of Narayana at Melokote. I have elsewhere* shown that the persecution of the Jains ascribed to Vishnuvardhana is hardly approved by facts. The consecration of the temple at Melokote is placed in the year 1099 A.D. twelve years after Ramanuja's arrival at Saligram. This might have been the case as Ramanuja would have taken care not to provoke the hostility of the ruler of his new domicile. Vishnuvardhana thenceforward supported the cause of Ramanuja and encouraged Vaishnavism. He went on building temples and endowing them not without supporting the other temples and creeds as well though not perhaps to the same extent. This activity culminated in the building and consecration of the temple at Belur in (or about) 1117 A.D.† There is nothing improbable in the date as it was in this year that he could claim to have become master of the Gangavadi. So Ramanuja must have lived in Mysore for nearly a quarter of a century. It was the death of the Chola Kulottunga in 1118 A.D. that enabled him to return. But then there is perhaps an inconsistency with respect to dates. As the Guruparamparai has it it would appear that the Chola died soon after the

* *Mysore Review* for March 1903. (Vide Appendix.)

† Hassan vol. of the *Epigraphia Carnataka* Ins. Belur 58 & 71.

blinding of the two friends of Ramanuja, but in actual fact, if the date 1099 A D be taken as correct for the Melukote incident, which appears too early to be true, the death of the persecuting Chola came many years after. This kind of accuracy, it would be too much to expect in an account such as we have and of its professed character.

vii The next incident of importance is the conversion of Amudan of Arangam, the manager of the temple at Srirangam, a non Vaishnava. For this we have evidence of the convert himself. He is the author of the Ramanuja Nurtandhadhi and in verses 3, 4 and 7 of the work he makes it clear that he was a convert by favour of Ramanuja and Kurathalwar. In verses 8, 21, he clearly describes Ramanuja's relation to the Alvars and Nadhamuni and Alavandar (Yamunai-thuraiyar), in spite of opinions to the contrary by scholars who implicitly believe in the opinion of Dr. Caldwell. Not only this. The centum (in fact 108) of his verses gives in a small span, mostly allusively but clearly enough, the main achievements of Ramanuja and becomes the contemporary authority for most of the facts of Ramanuja's life as detailed above. The moderation of tone and sobriety of language commend its authority the more as else Ramanuja would not have been persuaded into including it among the Prabandam 4000.

viii Lastly comes the construction and consecration of the Govinda shrine at the foot of the Tirupati Hill. This affords the best clue to the date of Ramanuja. The Gurnparampari gives this as the last act of a busy life under circumstances which, thanks to the researches of Brahma Sri R. Raghava Iyengar, Court Pandit of Ramnand and Editor of the *Sen Tamil*, the organ of the Madura Tamil Sangam, prove to

be quite historical. The story, it will be remembered, is that the Guriuda Raja temple at Chidambaram having been removed from the premises of the great Siva temple Ramanuja and his disciples got the idol enshrined in a new temple at Tirupathi. In a number of historical works relating to the period, particularly in the Kulottunga Cholan Ula of Ottakathan* this achievement is ascribed to Kulottunga II, the son and successor of Vikrama Chola and one of the patrons of Kuthan himself. There it is described that he renovated the Siva temple and plated the roofing with gold—incidentally mentioning that the 'God Vishnu had been sent back to his original shrine—the sea'†. This would mean not only the removal but the throwing of the image into the sea. In another, there is a reference to Kulottunga's having rooted out the minor Gods from the great shrine. This must have taken place in the reign of Kulottunga II (cir 1128-1146). That the Vaishnavas were enabled to enshrine the God at Tirupathi perhaps shows the limitation of the Chola authority at the time or their indifference in the fact provided the obnoxious God had been removed from the hallowed presence of their "Holy of Holies," a place full of the most narrow minded of the Saivites. That the Vishnu shrine was previously in the temple at Chidambaram is borne out by a reference in the works of the Manikka Vasagar (Tiruchchirrambalakkuvai 86). There is absolutely no reason to doubt the authority of these works about this particular and this would give us the ultimate limits of Ramanuja's active life. Accord- ing to the traditional account Ramanuja lived for 120 years from 1017 A.D.—1137 A.D. Some object to this length and regard it as a fabrica-

* Sen Tamil Vol III, pt 5 pp (166—167)

† Sen Tamil Vol III, pt 8 pp (301—302)

tion just to give the reformer the 'Mahadasa' as it is called. It is a matter of very small consequence to us whether he lived the 120 years or no. What is more important for our purposes is that his was a long and active life and covered three reigns of the Cholas — Kulottunga I (1070 A D to 1118 A D, Vikrama chola (1118 A D—1135 A D), Kulottunga II. 1123—1146 A D) Ramannja's active life might therefore, be safely referred to the last quarter of the 11th and the first half of the 12th century A D

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RAMANUJA

BY

PROF T RAJAGOPALACHARYAR M.A. B.L.

THE TERM VISISHTADWAITA EXPLAINED

THE Visishtadwaita is so called because it inculcates the *adwaita* or oneness of God with *vishesha* or attributes. It is therefore 'qualified non dualism'. God alone exists all else that is seen in His manifestation attribute or *Sakti*. Such attributes are *chit* or the individual souls and *achit* or matter. The Advaitic position is also that God alone exists and all else is manifestation. Herein is the common element between the two views but the Advaitin regards the manifestation as unreal and temporary, and as a result of *Avidya* or *Nescience*. In consequence the one Brahman is without any attribute in his view. Ramanuja and his school regard the attributes as real and permanent but subject to the control of the one Brahman in all their modifications and evolution. The oneness of God is compatible with the existence of attributes as the latter are incapable of existing alone and so do not constitute independent things. They are called the *pralayas* or the modes *vesha* or the accessories and *nijamya* or the controlled of the one Brahman. The word Brahman is thus used either to denote the central unity when it becomes possible to speak of the souls and matter as its attributes or to denote the combined trinity when the whole universe may properly be described as consisting of Brahman and Brahman alone. The Visishtadwaitin does not make the philosophical statement that the souls are absolutely independent entities endowed with the capacity of

separate existence and activity, apart from Brahman

THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTES

The Brahman (we use the word in the first of the above senses) is Intelligence. It is something more—it is the Knower. Where attributes are denied, and all—that exists is homogeneous intelligence as in the Adwaita there can be no knower for there is nothing to know. But for the Visishtadwaitin Brahman is a knower, and the variety, philosophically essential for knowledge, is furnished by the attributes. Brahman is Bliss i.e. he is blissful for a mixture of the opposite pain is unimaginable in his case. It will thus be seen that besides the attributes of souls and matter, which may be called 'the concrete attributes' if such a phrase may be used Brahman has various abstract attributes qualities strictly so called denoting his perfection from various points of view. The Visishtadwaitin considers Intelligence as partaking of the dual character of an abstract and a concrete attribute and he instances light as an example of the possibility of such an attribute. Intelligence is the essence of Brahman it is an attribute as well in its nature of universal pervasion. Again Brahman is real satya. By this is understood that he is without vitana or modification of any kind. The souls and matter are asatya or unreal which again means that they are subject to modification which is necessarily an element of impurity. In the case of souls this modification takes the form of expansion or contraction of Intelligence. In mineral plant or animal life the soul under *Iarmic* control is dull or of suppressed Intelligence. The modifications of matter are of a more serious kind. In the creation and expansion of the universe matter undergoes a real modification of its nature. Such change is

called *parinama* or evolution as contrasted with *utarta* or apparent variation which is the view of the Advaitin. The Visishtadvaitin holds that in spite of the souls and matter being pervaded by Brahman and modifications of them though under Brahman's control do not touch His essence just as the Advaitin maintains that the operation of *Avidya* does not affect the one Reality. The unreality of the cosmos is thus another point of agreement between the Advaitin and the Visishtadvaitin but this it must be admitted is merely a nominal agreement considering the important diversity in their conceptions of the unreality. The Visishtadvaitin would thus call Brahman *Sat* and the rest *Asat* in a narrower sense he reserves the epithet *Asat* to Matter which undergoes change in its essence unlike the souls whose essence is like to the Brahman and never changes.

TWO STATES OF BRAHMAN

There are two states of existence for the Brahman. One is absolute quiescence or *pralaya* when all the souls and matter exist in Him in deep sleep as it were. No differentiation is possible in that stage between the souls and matter these are then as it were non-existent.

Sat alone exists one without a second. Existence is the only phrase that can be applied to the Brahman then as volition not to speak of creation is potential or has not commenced to work. Then begins the second stage, creation. To the Advaitin creation is a negative an unreal act. It is the clouding of the pure Intelligence of Brahman by the inexplicable *Avidya* which produces the manifestation of apparent diversity. The Visishtadvaitin considers creation as a positive volitional effort of the Brahman to display real diversity by actualising the energy for change which is innate in both the souls and

matter *Sa Akshata bahu syam prajayeya iti* 'He thought, may I become many, may I grow forth' The *antah pratesa* 'entry within' which Upanishads speak of as taking place at creation is, not strictly true To the Visishtadwaitin, it means only the Brahman's willing to develop His inseparable attributes, souls and matter, for Brahman was 'within' even before creation To the Adwaitin, the *antah pratesa* is entirely metaphorical The language of the *Parinama Vada* is used in his view, merely for faulty of comprehension

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

The ethical justification for creation is Justice The fruits of actions (*karma*) have to be bestowed, equally and impartially, and Brahman does this by endowing souls with appropriate bodies of various kinds and giving room for further functioning and display of free will within limits, the further evolution depends on the manner in which the individual uses his opportunities As *karma* is in the Hindu view, beginningless it becomes unnecessary to account for its origin To the objection that Brahman could have no purpose being without wants in engaging itself in creation the reply is in the words of the author of the *Sutras lakshat tu lila lalalyam* (II 189) it is mere recreation as in ordinary life In other words as no compulsion can be predicated of the Brahman to evolve the universe, the Visishtadwaitin accounts for it by the only other possible alternative that it is mere recreation for the Brahman but the strictest justice for the souls concerned Sankara adds the explanation that His innate nature (*svabhava*) is to create which does not carry us much further, and then reminds us that the whole discussion is unreal, as Brahman is never the agent of creation

THE AUTHORITY OF REVELATION

To the Visishtadvaitins as to the Advaitins the Vedas and Smritis are the sole and independent authority for the knowledge of Brahman. Reason has no operation except in matters perceptible by the senses. Transcendental notions as those with respect to the nature and attributes of Brahman and the soul can only be got from Revelation. This position appears illogical dethroning as it does Reason the accepted instrument of correct conclusion in all processes of thought. To explain this anomaly we have to dwell a little on the exact place assigned to reason by Sankara as well as Ramanuja. Reason is an indefinite word. It depends for its correctness on the intellectual capacity of the person arguing the extent of his information and other circumstances. Until a fallacy is exposed an argument is apparently sound. Then it is upset and the conclusion has to be reached by other reasoning. This want of finality in mere reason is referred to in the Sutra (II 1 11) and is the cause of the Vedantic system rejecting it as a sufficient authority in the knowledge of Brahman as the Naiyayikas did. The argument from design may at best establish a highly endowed intelligent first cause or cause^s but could not lead to the conception of a perfect Brahman as first cause. And so the help of mere reason as a sufficiently competent determining factor in the establishment of Brahman as first cause is rejected. This must not be taken to mean that the Hindu Vedantins reject argumentation in their philosophy. Every page of their writings is a standing monument of their skill in the subtlest reasonings. According to them the purpose of reasoning is twofold. It has in the first place full scope in matters which do not transcend the senses. In the second place it is a valuable adjunct in ontology where the texts of the Vedas are to be

constrained. As it so happens that most important texts are liable to be disputed as to their meanings, it goes without saying that there is full room for logical interpretation with respect to them. To say that explicit Vedic texts are unquestionable authorities means one of two things, either that we take them as the conclusions of great minds reached after acute reasoning on matters which our feeble intellects could not sufficiently comprehend or we consider them to be the records of unique direct experiences of men who had trained their powers of mental perception by methods to which we have no access. Neither position is inconceivable or necessarily absurd. So many scientific positions are accepted by the general body of educated men all over the world on the faith of representations that those positions have been verified by some one by actual experiments. There may be danger of mistakes and misstatements in either case but those like Sankara and Ramanuja, who do not feel the position of an agnostic satisfactory or comfortable have preferred to base their ontological position on revelation while fully trusting to their capacity for ratiocination to meet objections on the part of those who do not subscribe to the authority of the Vedas. Between these two there is however a difference. Sankara includes the *Sruti*s and *Smriti*s among ephemeral things whose purpose is served when once oneness is realised. Ramanuja considers them as always authoritative and as expressive of the eternal commands of the Deity whose breath they are said to be. An important difference arises between these two thinkers based on this distinction. In Sankara's view the compulsory nature of ordained duties lasts only till an individual has realised by thinking his unity with God. Ramanuja considers the performance of such duties obligatory as long as life and physical power endure. (See *Sutras* III 1 82 85)

There are also certain assertions in Ramanuja's religious tenets which must be unacceptable to those who do not believe in revelation or adopt his interpretation. Such are his eternally free souls (*nityas*) heaven conceived as a distinct place apart from and outside the changeable universe (though not *entis de Brahman*) the existence of the Deity in physical forms of various kinds the peculiar paths of souls on their release from the body and so on. Belief in these is based on express texts and no reasoning can be called to prove them. It is Ramanuja's contention that reasoning is equally powerless to disapprove them. And a disapproval of these in no way affects Ramanuja's conclusions as regards the nature of Brahman and its relation to souls and matter as philosophical positions consonant to abstract reasoning.

MODE OF RECONCILIATION

When now come to Ramanuja's mode of reconciling Vedic texts. Western scholars have tried to arrange chronologically the principal Upanishads and to discern in some of them partial truths in others crude statements in others again the completest insight into things transcendental that may be given to men. How far this discussion is convincing we shall not stop to examine. Where passages in the same Upanishads appear to conflict as in the *Chanlogya* the *Brihad Aranyaka* or the *Isa Vasya* it is evident that the ordinary rules of interpretation must be resorted to to arrive at a consistent meaning. The respect which Hindus have entertained for the Upanishads on account of their antiquity has prevented them from considering any of them as of inferior authority to the rest. It follows that a consistent doctrine has to be attempted out of at least the principal Upanishads. This is what Sankara and Ramanuja have attempted to do each in his own way. And this is indeed what Badarayana the

first interpreter of the Upanishads known to us, has himself done in the *Sūtras*

Professor Deussen, and others have conjectured that Badarayana had a partiality for the Chandogya and hence the frequent reference to it in the topics discussed. Indian scholars thoroughly equipped with an intimate acquaintance with the immense and highly technical philosophical literature which is only just beginning to be studied and comprehended in part by European scholars "to use the words of Dr Thibaut have ascertained that in the two *Mīmāṃsās* the passages discussed in each *adhikāṣaṇa* are only typical and not exhaustive and that the order of exposition is mainly based on logical sequence. It follows that there is no justification for the view that one or two Upanishads are specially intended as the repository of philosophical truths to the exclusion of other Upanishads.

The texts of the Upanishads referring to the Supreme Self are of two kinds. Some speak of Him as *nirguṇa* attributeless. Others describe him as having attributes or qualities like wisdom, power, etc. As truth can be only one the natural question arises whether these texts can be reconciled in any manner. Śaṅkara's view is that predominance must be given to the *nirguṇa* texts as the others have the effect of limiting the Infinite which should not be done. Hence texts like '*Ekaṃ eva Advaityam*' one only without a second *neha nana Asti* ' there is here no diversity etc., are interpreted by him without much straining as establishing the absolute oneness of the Brahman. And the other texts are relegated to an inferior position and made to refer to an imaginary and inferior Brahman called *apara* or *laya* Brahman i.e. the Brahman in conjunction with its creative power called *maṇa*. Ramanuja's difficulty seems to be that this sharp division of

the passages into those referring to the higher and those referring to the lower Brahman is not easily and directly inferable from the texts themselves. On the other hand, the passages are so mixed up that it is impossible to say that this distinction, if true, was ever prominently kept up. His reconciliation is, therefore, as follows: the texts of the Upanishads do not inculcate an attributeless Brahman; the attributes are real and not the result of Avidya → the texts referring to those attributes expound the Brahman, as He is, with the souls and matter as His inseparable *modes*. Brahman is one, only in His compound nature, as described already. The texts denying any attributes for Him are to be taken as meaning that He has no low or insuspicious attributes, such as liability to changes, death, sorrow, etc. The texts as to creation, as mentioned already, mean a real modification of the attributes, souls and matter of the Brahman and do not mean that Brahman becomes suffused with Nescience and imagines a variety. *The souls are many and God is immanent, both to them and in matter.* The texts which speak of unity and deny variety do so of the totality of the Brahman with his attributes. Texts, which deny a second to Brahman, mean that there is no other controlling power in the universe apart from Him. Texts which deny the possibility of knowing Brahman, do not mean that he cannot be the object of thought, as there is no thinker; they mean only that His wonderful and priceless excellences or qualities could not be adequately described. Else, according to Ramanaia, they would conflict with hosts of passages which prescribe knowledge of Brahman and ascribe qualities to Him. The text of the Brihad Aranyaka II. 3. 6, which contains the famous words "neti neti" "not so, not so" and is taken by Sankara to teach the negation of all attributes is interpreted by Ramanaia (Sotras. III. 2.21) as

merely denying the possibility of adequate knowledge of the Brahman "This interpretation" says he, "is confirmed by the fact that after the negative phrase comes an epithet of Brahman as 'the True of the True, for the *Pranas* are the True'" Ramanuja interprets this text to mean that the *Pranas* or the individual souls are *satya* or 'true,' i.e., not subject to change in their essence, while the Supreme Self is altogether real or unchangeable "He is, therefore more eminently true than they (the souls) are"

THE THEORY OF CAUSATION

The theory of causation has profoundly exercised the minds of all Hindu philosophers, the Vedantins, like the Sankhyas maintain the oneness of cause and effect in essence, as opposed to the logicians who maintain that they are different In what sense then, is the world which is an effect, one with its cause? Bada rayana has a topic discussing this point (Sutras, I IV 23, etc) Here he maintains that the Brahman is not merely the instrumental cause, but also the material cause of the universe He is in the position not merely of the potter but also of the mud to give an illustration familiar to Indian philosophers A succeeding Sutra, (I 4 27) refers to the way in which Brahman as the cause becomes the effect It is by '*parinama*' or owing to modification In Ramanuja's view the oneness of cause and effect arises from the fact that the cause is the Brahman in the *sukshma* or subtle state when the souls and matter are undeveloped and the effect is Brahman also now comprised of the Supreme Self and the souls and matter, the latter in a fully developed state* Sankara,

* The phrase '*Vaishtadwantam*' is sometimes explained as the oneness or identity and the two *Vaishta* entities mentioned in the text, as cause and effect

practically admitting the interpretation of the Sūtras given above, would however, explain the modification as 'Vivarta' really i. e., phenomenal creation by Brahman as influenced by Avidya or Maya. That the two philosophers are entirely at variance in their view of this oneness is also clear from their respective commentaries on the important Sūtra II 1 15, (14, in Sankara's numbering) a discussion of which would be out of place in this brief exposition. We would only draw attention to an important and suggestive statement of Sankaracharya, at the close of his commentary of the above Sūtra, that Badarayana, in his view, omits to contradict the reality of the manifested world and adopts the language of the *Parinama Vada*, for the purpose of facilitating the exposition of the 'saguna meditations later on in the work.

THE DOCTRINE OF NESCIENCE

Ramannja's Sri Bhashya is remarkable for the lengthy disquisition on various topics by which his actual commentary on the Sūtras is preceded. In this disquisition he treats of various controversial points and expounds fully his differences of views from those of Sankara. One of the most important of these is his statement of objections to the theory of Maya or Avidya which is a fundamental one in Sankara's philosophy and is at the same time the most vulnerable point in it. Is this Avidya different from or identical with Brahman? The former view would seem to undermine Sankara's doctrine of oneness and the latter is equally untenable. Sankara cuts the gordian knot by boldly declaring that it (the Avidya) is Sadasadanirvachanaya i. e. it is indescribable as either existing or non-existing. Ramanuja expounds at great length his difficulties as to the tenability of the Maya theory, under

seven heads, a clear account of which is to be found in Professor Rangacharya's 'Analytical notice' prefixed to his valuable translation of the Sri Bhasya Vol I. Ramanuja's objections are of this wise. The Avidya cannot operate on the Brahman, directly for His nature is Intelligence and this would repel Nescience by its intrinsic merit. Nor can it operate on the individual souls for these are the outcome of the action of Avidya and cannot, therefore be acted upon in anticipation. Again to state that Nescience clouds the Brahman is impossible for that would mean that Brahman's luminous nature is thereby destroyed a position which is not admissible. Avidya, again as defined by Sankara is in Ramanuja's view, inconceivable as the simultaneous possession of two opposite characters as existence and non existence, cannot be predicated of anything in human conception. Ramanuja further, does not think that to describe Avidya as 'indescribable' really strengthens the position of Sankara, for if a thing is absolutely 'indescribable' it must be so existent as an entity. Then Ramanuja points out that such as Avidya cannot be proved to exist by any known means of proof including Vedic or Smriti texts. If such as Avidya should exist it is irremovable says Ramanuja, for the knowledge of attributeless Brahman required to remove it is according to him an impossible thing such a Brahman not being provable. Lastly such an Avidya is irremovable for another reason. In Ramanuja's view the ignorance being the result of Karma can be removed only by enjoined action and meditation. Mere knowledge of Brahman cannot remove it. For all these reasons Ramanuja concludes that the theory of Maya is untenable and opposed to the tenor of the Vedic texts.

CONCLUSION

It is not the purpose of this sketch to explain all Ramanujaa's objections to Sankaracharya's views. What has been attempted is only the setting forth of Ramanujaa's views on important points with just as much reference to the doctrines of Sankara as is necessary to understand Ramanuja. To really grasp the vital differences between these two eminent philosophers and to arrive at a proper estimate of their relative merits would mean a thorough discussion of three important questions namely, (1) who is the better interpreter of the Upanishads (2) who has more accurately represented the views of the Vedanta Sotras and (3) who is entitled to greater respect as a philosophical thinker. These are questions of so difficult a nature that they are entirely beyond our scope and capacity. Enough has however been said to show that Ramanuja when he becomes better known would most certainly be deemed entitled to a high place among the world's philosophers and his system though not possessing the simplicity or universality of Sankaracharya's is yet an eminently sound *one compatible with the admission of the reality of the cosmos and a high conception of the nature and attributes of the Deity*

RAMANUJA AND VAISHNAVISM

BY

PROF M RANGACHARYA M A

VAISHNAVISM is a very old form of religion known to the History of Civilisation in India. How old it is it is not now possible to determine but it is certain that its sources may be traced to the Vedas. Vishnu in Vedic literature is seen to be a solar deity and is conceived as an all pervading god. It is in accordance with a very widely accepted Indian derivation of the word to interpret Vishnu as a pervader and the conception of this same god as Trivikrama—as the god who was able to cover the whole universe in three strides—is also distinctly Vedic in origin. Moreover as a god he is said to have his place in the supreme heaven in *Vishnuk paramam padam* as it is called in the Vedas. Modern European scholars consider that this *parama pada* of Vishnu is in all probability the position of the sun in the zenith. This is obviously the highest position conceivable that may be occupied by any object during the day. Thus Vishnu was of old a solar deity who occupied the highest heaven and was at the same time capable of pervading with his light and life all the three worlds making up the visible universe the earth world the mind world and the sky world. The all pervading god and the god who occupies the highest heaven—such evidently is the conception underlying Vishnu in Vedic literature. From this conception as its source has arisen Vaishnavism which in its various forms is now recognised to be the most predominant and the most popular religion among the Hindus. To ascertain and describe the

position occupied by Ramanuja in relation to the progress and development of this great religion is the main aim which I intend to keep in view in my lecture

The primary conception underlying the original deity is a matter of great importance in determining the course of development of the religion associated with that deity. This can be amply illustrated by means of instances that may be gathered from the history of religions. There is for instance another solar deity in Vedic literature who goes by the name of MITRA and this god Mitra understood as the Sanskrit language requires is the sun god conceived as a friend. This Mitra is not merely a god of our Vedas but is a god known to the Zend Avesta of the Parsees as well. He seems therefore to have been a god held in honour by the Iranian as well as by the Indian Aryas even before they separated from each other. That separation must of course have taken place very very long ago. It may well be that this Mitra was a deity worshipped in Persia before Zoroaster taught his religion—the modern religion of the Parsees. A great French savant Ernest Renan has solemnly remarked that if Christianity had not gone to Europe in all probability Mitraism would have become the religion of Europeans. In saying this he evidently pays a very high compliment to this religion of MITRA and draws our attention to the tendency of that religion in its helpful to man in the way of encouraging in him purity love piety and righteousness. He even seems to grant that the moral influence of that religion could indeed have been in no way inferior to that which Christianity has had among Europeans and Americans. Now can it be said that the original conception of this god as a friend has had no power or part in determining the really

superior moral merit of Mitraism? Surely its friendly god must have done a great deal in determining the line of development of that religion.

So it must have been in connection with the religion of Vishnu also. Moreover, we find here that, in very early times, another idea more prominently brought to light in connection with another Vedic deity, Bhaga, came to be associated with the religion of Vishnu. That other idea is in fact the conception of god Bhaga as a bestower of auspicious blessings. This god Bhaga is perhaps an older god than even Mitra. God Bhaga appears to have had an Indo-European history. He was known to the ancient religion of the Slavs, to the ancient religion of the Parsees, and also to the ancient religion of the Aryas of this country. As the bestower of auspicious blessings, Bhaga seems to have been very highly honoured and held in great reverence as a typical god. This word *bhaga* in later Sanskrit literature came to assume many meanings. It may now mean the sun, but very frequently means good blessings and auspicious qualities and great powers. Thus the name of the sun god, looked upon as a bestower of blessings and of auspicious powers, may easily be seen to have undergone a deterioration in meaning, so as to import not the god but the physical object symbolising the god, or those blessings and those powers whereof the god was originally conceived to be the bestower. When in this manner the earlier meanings of this word as the name of a god became almost forgotten among the people, the other later meaning naturally gained ground. It must be in consequence of an identification of the god himself with the power of goodness that he possessed, that the word *bhaga* ceased to be the name of the god and came to denote chiefly his power of goodness

and grace After this took place we observe a change in the structure of the name of the god that name is no longer Bhaga but Bhagavat This changed word means the possessor of those beneficent qualities and auspicious powers which have come to be represented by the word *bhaga* In that way there arose a religion in which the worship of the Bhagavat was the chief element and in it the Bhagavat came to be looked upon as the Supreme God The religion which has been based on this worship of the Bhagavat is called the Bhagavata religion It appears to be distinctly described in the *Mahabharata* And even European and American critics seem to be fairly in agreement in holding that the *Mahabharata* in its present form must have been well known in India not later than the 11th century before the Christian era The *Mahabharata* is rightly conceived to be a work that could not have been produced at any one time by any one man Although in the epic itself its authorship is ascribed to Vyasa there is ample indication in it of frequent additions having been made to it in later times and this sort of growth in size must have gone on with it for some centuries If it is true that this growth reached its culmination about the 4th century before Christ and if we have distinct references to the Bhagavata religion in the *Mahabharata* then the worship of the Bhagavat must have been current for a fairly long time before that in India That the Bhagavat may well be traced to the Vedic Bhaga is a point which does not seem to me to be in any manner improbable There is some reason to believe that Sri Krishna was probably the originator of the Bhagavata religion and Megasthenes is considered to have been well aware of the prevalence of Krishna worship in his days in North India Now if Vishnu and the Bhagavat are to be identified as they seem to have

been identified from very early times in this country, thereby Vaishnavism is naturally bound to become more comprehensive and to acquire a more expanded and more lovable moral meaning. Accordingly Vaishnavism came to mean in due time the worship of an all pervading God who is in the highest heaven and is at the same time the bestower of all auspicious powers and benevolent blessings. Here in this combined conception of God we have the very heart so to say of Vaishnavism. From this central idea arose all the later developments of this religion as also all its later adaptations to the needs of progressive Hindu life.

In the same manner as Vaishnavism, Saivism also may be traced to the Vedas—to the Deity Rudra so well known in Vedic literature. Vishnu is a solar deity in the Vedas as I mentioned to you already. Rudra is therein conceived to be Agni—the fire god. From the Vedic conception of Rudra as the god of fire arose Saivism even as from the conception of the sun god arose the later worship of Vishnu as the one Supreme God. Why did these later developments and modifications in religion come into existence in this country one may very well ask. Why was there the gradual overthrow of the old Vedic religion of sacrifices and why the introduction of the later religions based on the *Upanishads*, the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and *Āgamas*? That is indeed an interesting question to ask. The development of thought in Indian civilisation made it necessary that the old Vedic religion of ritualism should be superseded by another religion which had more of real life in it and was more capable of satisfying the religious needs and aspirations of the human heart irrespective of all considerations of race, caste and social status. Nevertheless this new religion could not be altogether new. In fact the progress of religion is so effected in the history of all civil-

rations that no new religion can be absolutely or unmixedly new. When a new institution or a new idea has to be introduced among a people for their immediate benefit it invariably happens that this new institution or new idea becomes implanted upon something that is really old. And the new idea or the new institution growing in the midst of old surroundings absorbs and assimilates a great deal of what is old from its environment and in the result the old and the new together sprout up in a new form so as to make the new product viewed as a whole more comprehensive more beautiful and more helpful to the achievement of culture and character and civilization among the people. That is the way of progress everywhere. Whether we trace the origin for instance of Buddhism or Christianity or trace the course of civilization in China or Japan or France or England or India we invariably find that new ideas and institutions grow in the midst of old environments and under the impulse of old forces which are still alive and active in operation. We thus learn to see that every new growth is largely the result of the assimilation of much that is old with something that is new.

In the course of the development of the sacrificial religion of the Vedas the influence of the priests at one time became so markedly predominant that the gods themselves almost began to disappear from the vision of the sacrificers. And what loomed largely before their eyes was the performance of the sacrifice in accordance with the strict letter of the law. Another thing which also must have loomed largely was the rewarding of the sacrificial priests by the payment of valuable *dakṣiṇā* or honorarium to them. To what extent such a decline of the true religious spirit took place may be made out from the fact that some of the later *Munis* *śālas* when dealing with

the question of who the *Devintas* are, to whom sacrifices are offered, hastily dismissed the question itself by giving out that we need not at all trouble ourselves about who the *Devintas* are. They went quite so far as to say that the *Devata* is simply that thing the name whereof is seen inflected in the dative case in sacrificial formulas like *Indraya stahn* for instance. 'Who is Indra?' is the question asked let us suppose. The reply is—"Don't ask who he is. He may be anything or nothing. He is simply that thing the name of which is here in this formula inflected in the dative case." When each an answer is given to such a question, we may at once make out what relative importance must have been attached to the question of who or what the gods are as compared with the numerous and complex details of the sacrificial ceremonial. When mere sacrificial details become too much all absorbing all considerations regarding who or what the deity is, what its powers are why we should worship it were thrown into the background. In fact these and other more interesting details bearing upon the question of godhood rapidly went behind the curtain. As all thought bearing upon the vital question of godhood in religion disappeared in that manner what happened to be left behind was nothing more than mere form overloaded with numerous complicated and unattractive details involving much useless expenditure of time wealth and labour.

Naturally the common human heart would be prone to rebel against such a religion. There can indeed be no real life of any kind in an over encrusted and fossilised shell of religion. There is nothing in it to touch the heart and make it burn with the magic fire of spiritual fervour and moral emotion and sympathetic exaltation. It is too dry and too mechanical too much of a sham.

to satisfy the deep religious longings of the aspiring and uplifted heart. In the early stages of its development Vedic religion was not like this either in its aim or in its practical use. From the very beginning it was indeed an earnest endeavour to rise from nature to Nature's God. In the hymns and prayers and chants addressed to the numerous nature gods of the Vedas a careful student may easily observe a growing tendency towards the realisation of what is sometimes called personal monotheism. The many gods of an earlier age become merged in the one God and are identified with Him and this one God does not lose His divinity or His personality. May we consider that such a really divine and personal God has to be an essential element in all truly satisfying religions. Anyhow there must be for the common man in his religion something to grasp and to worship as a Supreme Power and Personality who would lovingly come to help him in times of difficulties and to whom he might with complete confidence surrender himself in all conditions of trial and sorrow and suffering. Religion has even been defined as a kind of self-surrender as the surrender of themselves which men make to a Higher Power feeling unable to look after themselves in this world of troubles and turmoils—in this world wherein even the most thoughtful man feels that he is blundering and tossed about without any aid from any really capable and truly knowing guide. Such a puzzling thing is indeed this world of ours! It is in fact so full of mystery and so full of pitfalls to the earnest and thoughtful man that he naturally feels that it would be good for him to seek and obtain the support of a Supreme Power so that he may throw himself entirely on the mercy of that Power and derive unerring guidance from It and take safe refuge with It whenever necessary. It is very proper

that this kind of feeling should come to the human mind most commonly and most readily particularly in times of great danger and difficulty. When such a trying hour comes how will the over formal sacrifice with all its elaborate details of ritual help the aching heart of the man in trouble? How will the idea that the deity may be nothing other than what happens to be represented by the word which is inflected in the dative case in a sacrificial formula help him? You can all easily see that a conception of the deity such as this will give him no help no support no comfort. It is therefore very natural for the common man not to take into account the definition of the deity as given by these sacrifice loving latter day *Mimamsakas*. He wants his God to be real to be supernatural and transcendental and to be possessed at the same time of the requisite love and power to be ever near him and help him effectively.

In this way more than one of the prominent gods of the Vedas began to be personally worshipped otherwise than through the old over formal sacrifices gods such as Indra Rudra Brahma and Vishnu. We have enough evidence to indicate that many Vedic gods came to be so worshipped independently. In the course of this process some people chose one deity for their worship while others chose other deities. Besides this we have to take note of the fact that the Aryas who brought their Vedic religion and Aryan civilization into this land were new-comers from outside and they were comparatively few in number. Before they came to this land other people were dwelling therein whose language and civilization were different and whose ideas and institutions were different from those of the Aryas. These original inhabitants were as far as we can make out with the help of available evidence—which is however hostile—

a rather wild people who nevertheless had a real civilization of their own and had also an ordered social organization of their own. They were often found to be very powerful and clever in their conduct of affairs. Above all they had also a religion of their own although this religion of theirs is declared to have been comparatively of a much lower kind than that of the Aryas. The religion that was then current among them is understood to have been characterised by the worship of the phallos of serpents and trees and other things of that kind and by reason of the magic and witchcraft associated therewith it appears to have been a primitive magical religion as well. These and other primitive elements of religion must have been found to exist among the original inhabitants of India when the Aryas came in with their comparatively higher and more potent civilization. At that time these comparatively less cultured and less civilized original inhabitants could not of course grasp the meaning and aim of the Vedic chants and of the sacrificial religion of the victorious Aryas. And the Aryan priests who were responsible for the proper conduct of the Aryan sacrifices considered as it was very natural in those days that only the Aryan people were entitled to perform those Aryan sacrifices. So the sacrificial religion of the Aryas could not easily be made to spread among the non Aryan inhabitants of the land. In addition to this the common human tendency of these non Aryans in favour of a personally responsive deity must have to a noticeable extent told against that fatal completion of the sacerdotal process of ceremonial fossilisation in religion.

This sort of exclusiveness in religion is nothing very strange or very peculiar in the history of human civilisation. Those of you that

know anything about the religion of the Jews may remember that, till a very late period in the history of Judaism, it was an exclusive religion. It was a religion to adopt which the Jews alone were, by birth, entitled, but the Gentiles were not. Later on, however, the Jews also began to take in converts to their religion they did not, however, allow these converts to enter freely the Holy of Holies in their temple at Jerusalem. These converts were allowed to go only as far as the gate, and for this reason they went by the name of the Proselytes of the Gate. And even this became permissible, as I told you, very late in the history of Judaism. In the earlier stages of its history, Judaism was a rigorously exclusive religion. So also, if you go to the earlier history of Rome and of Greece, you will find there the same religious exclusiveness. The religion of the Latin tribes was distinctively exclusive. Nobody, who did not belong to any one of those Latin tribes, had any right to take part in the public worship which they conducted from time to time. Among the Hellenic people of Greece also, those who did not by birth belong to the Hellenic fraternity, were not allowed to take part in their public worship. In fact, in connection with the development of every historically evolved religion we find that at one time in the early stage of its evolution it must have been exclusive. And yet the exclusiveness of the sacrificial religion of the Vedas has been, in modern days, made the theme of much harsh criticism directed against the ancient Brahmanical priests of India. The chief complaint against these priests is that they managed to keep all higher religion and higher social privileges to themselves and that the sense of human equality was smothered by them and kept away in the region of the improper and the impossible. This

is an accusation based on ignorance in relation to the exact conditions of historic evolution in religion. We have to bear in mind that in the progress of human civilization most early religions are characterised by exclusiveness at first. We generally start with the exclusive religion of the tribe, and this sometimes develops into the religion of a group or federation of tribes which again may under favourable circumstances, grow into the religion of a nation. In all these stages religion has to be largely exclusive, and it is only at last that we arrive at the universal religion. If we bear this great fact in the history of religion in mind we may see at once how the bottom of this accusation against the ancient Aryan priests of India can be knocked off with the greatest ease.

Much of what I have said regarding early religious exclusiveness may look like a digression, but you will see that it is not without its bearing on the important question of the forces that gave rise to that universal religion, which has come to be known by the name of Vaishnavism. In the course of its natural development religion in our country also became more and more universal and with the growth of universalism in religion all distinctions of race, caste and creed had to disappear in the matter of men's religious eligibility for the attainment of the highest good of soul salvation. I say advisedly that even differences of creed disappeared in this matter under the benign influence of the larger religious universalism in the country because universal Hinduism has proved to be so comprehensively tolerant as to admit readily the title of all mankind for salvation and to take away from life much of the unwholesome bitterness of feeling generally arising from differences in religious creed and opinion. This is a point

in relation to Hinduism which can indeed be very fully demonstrated to be true

Here, I may, in passing, point out that even so early as the time of Vasishtha and Visvamitra the sympathetic and expansive tendencies of liberalism seem to have struggled to come up in the sphere of religion in India. Visvamitra was a liberal seer, even as Vasishtha was a conservative sage, who wanted the Vedic religion to be confined solely to the Aryas. That Visvamitra desired even this religion to be made universal, seems to be borne out by the well known story of Trisanku. Whether you approve of this view regarding our ancient Aryan liberalism in religion or not, this much is clear that in later times the sacrificial religion had in spite of its having been more or less expanded and allowed to spread largely, to disappear partly on account of its own overluxurions and redundant growth, and partly on account of its notable unsuitability to satisfy the earnest cravings in the heart of man after a real hearty and living religion. And when it thus naturally faded away we find that three deities known to the Vedas came to hold a prominent position in the popular religion of the Hindus—Rudra Vishnu and Brahma.

With this natural decadence of the overburdened Vedic ritualism and its many and multiform sacrifices we observe two religious forces making themselves more and more markedly effective and acting in consonance with each other in the evolution of further religious progress. The germs of philosophic speculation found in the Vedas grew rapidly and culminated in the production of our justly famous *Upanishads* and the popular force in favour of the personal deity also asserted itself as against the weakened sacerdotalism of decadent Vedic ritualism. It is in fact as the result of the operation of these

two forces that the idea of the Hindu Trinity of gods came into existence, so as to serve well the demands of religious philosophy on the one hand and the felt religious needs of the advancing popular mind on the other. When these gods of the Trinity came to hold a prominent position in Hindu religion even then the old spirit of the religion of the Vedas that among the gods there is none higher and none lower that each god as he is worshipped may well be looked upon as supreme—that spirit of *henotheism* as Max Müller called it—persisted among the thoughtful people and with its persistence it was impossible for them to declare that any one was higher or lower among these three gods. In the meanwhile philosophy had as I have already hinted begun to produce more notable results than in the earlier days of the religion of the Vedas. I don't mean to say that in the Vedas we do not see the real beginnings of Hindu philosophy. It would be very wrong if I said so. On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that potent germs of early philosophic thought are found in great abundance in the Vedas—particularly in the *Rig Veda* and the *Atharvana Veda*. That these germs should have grown well and produced large and highly valuable results is very natural indeed among a people so notably prone to be speculative and religious as the Hindus have been for centuries. The *Upanishads* are sometimes called the *Vedānta* which means literally the end of the Vedas. If it is not thus literally interpreted to mean the last portion of the Vedas it may be made to denote the aim or purpose of the Vedas that for the attainment of which the Vedas seem to have steadily striven. Whatever the interpretation of the word *Vedānta* may be we are able to trace in the treatises going by the name of the *Upanishads* the

sources of the later systems of Hindu philosophy known as the *Sankhya* the *Yoga* and the *Vedanta* systems. Even Buddhist and Jain philosophy are held by some to be traceable to them. Those treatises themselves do not give any definite expression to any particular system of philosophy. They are not the work of one mind like the systems of modern philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Mill or Spencer. Although not systematised as is modern philosophic works the thoughts in them are strikingly luminous, often very piercingly and gloriously luminous. These thoughts take us to the farthest limit of all philosophy and impel us to go even beyond and are expressed in language which is most enthralling and highly sublime. I believe my philosophic friends will support me if I say that after all there is much deadening influence in system making. As soon as we put together our philosophic thoughts into a system there is a natural tendency for that system to lose spontaneity and originality and to become lifeless and hidebound. They lose their power to expand and the germs of originality in them become crushed under the great pressure of the mechanical forces of systematisation. Luckily therefore for us the authors of the *Upanishads* were not like modern philosophers; they did not endeavour to build up systems. They must have felt that their function as teachers was simply to give free expression to what they from time to time saw like seers. They left system making to their later and weaker followers. That is why we have had in this country a profuse growth of pure and highly aspiring philosophy out of our *Upanishads*—of philosophy which has flourished in various forms and under various names and has been systematised in various ways by various scholars and sages and saints.

Among the systems of philosophy that arose out of the luminous thoughts of the *Upanishads* the very first was in all probability the *Sankhya* system of Kapila which is considered by Brahminical tradition also to be one of the oldest systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy. Then came the *Yoga* system and later on still by combining as I believe the *Sankhya* and the *Yoga* together came the *Vedanta* system. And when these systematised philosophies began to flourish they too had of course their part to play in shaping the growth of religion and in modifying the general conception of God among the people. I told you that in response to the inevitable cravings of the human heart the sacrificial religion of the Vedas had to be set aside in favour of a religion wherein there was a God who was a real support to the worshipper, a God with whom the worshipper could take refuge and from whom the worshipper could obtain love and help in times of trial and hardship. I also said that among the Vedic gods three came to occupy prominently the personal position which the human heart required that its gods should occupy and these are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In the early days of the origin of this Hindu Trinity the old henotheistic idea was evidently operating powerfully enough to prevent any such differentiation in rank among these gods as later controversy brought into existence in later times so as to embitter the religious feelings of the Hindus very much. Such a differentiation in rank between Vishnu and Siva for instance we don't see much of even about the time when our famous poet Kalidasa flourished. In dealing with these three gods Kalidasa looks upon them as though they were very nearly equal and shows no kind of partiality to any one deity at the

expense of another although there is very good reason to believe that he was himself a worshipper of Siva. When he happens to offer his prayers to Siva he offers them as to the Supreme Deity and when again he has to offer prayers to Vishnu he offers them similarly as if to the Supreme Deity and the language of philosophic description and praise he applies to Vishnu in one place is almost identical with the language of adoration he applies to Siva in another place. And he honours Brahma almost equally with these two gods. But how long is it possible for this religion of the equal Trinity to go on unchanged? How can you have three gods and consider each of them to be Supreme? It is inevitable for a question like this to arise after the mind begins to philosophise a little. If you do not philosophise—the god whom you for the time being consider to be Supreme—your heart naturally goes forth in adoration to that god and in his worship you forget everything else. But if you philosophise you are led to become more and more circumspect. In such circumspection there is both safety and danger and philosophical circumspection made the later attitude of India one of inquisitive doubt regarding this equal position of the *Trimurtis*. What I have called philosophical circumspection made it in fact necessary that the assumed position of equality among the gods of the Hindu Trinity must be accounted for in some reasonable manner. Thus there was naturally an apportionment of functions to these gods and all the three gods making up the *Trimurtis* were held to be different and partial manifestations of the one great God of advancing Hindu philosophy. Thus Brahma became the creator and Vishnu the sustainer and Siva the destroyer.

Why is that one of these gods came to be looked upon as creator another as sustainer and the third as destroyer? We have to note here firstly the effect of the germinal force underlying the ancient conception of these gods. The word *Brahman* is often used to denote the Vedic prayer that is offered to Vedic deities. Such Vedic prayer has been personified as a deity and declared to be powerful enough even to create. This conception of *Brahman* in the Veda resembles in many respects the Greek idea of the *Logos*. The relation between language and the meaning underlying language has played a great part in the development of Hindu philosophic thought particularly in the matter of explaining the relation between the visible universe and the invisible reality that is behind it. Often enough we find Indian philosophers saying that the visible universe is something like the audible word of language and that the invisible foundation of the universe is like the power of meaning possessed by language—the power of meaning which we cannot perceive with any of the senses. The relation between the word and its meaning has indeed been long held by our thinkers to be representative of the relation between the phenomenal universe and the reality which is behind it forming its enduring basis and everlasting support. That is indeed one of the noticeable ways in which we find higher Indian thought growing developing and expanding. Moreover in Vedic literature in the *Upanishads* in particular we have it stated that the Creator willed and thereby created the world. If you will how do you give expression to your will? You do so either by means of the language you speak or by means of the deed you do. Hence the language which gives expression to the will of the speaker may well become identified with the will

itself. And when the creating will is seen to be really responsible for the creation of the universe, we may very well maintain that it is the word, which gives expression to the will, that is responsible for such creation. Hence the expression *Bahu Syam* being representative of the will of the Creator naturally came to be recognised as the immediate cause of the production of creation. If we understand that the idea underlying *Brahman* is distinctly that of the 'word' and if we also bear in mind the relation between the word and its meaning as well as the relation between the will and the word which gives expression to it, we may very easily realise how natural it is for the idea of creation to become associated with the Vedic *Brahman*. Thus arose Brahma the creator in the Trinity and philosophy also differentiated and assigned to him the function of creation.

Now how about Siva? He is as you have been informed the Vedic god Rudra and as such the god of fire—Agni. The Agni as Rudra is declared in Vedic literature to have a *Santata tanuh* and also a *ghoratanuh*—a form which is lovely and peaceful and a form which is terrific and fierce. In the fierce form which he has we have to look upon him as a destroyer and a destroying god becomes naturally the punisher of faithlessness and evil doing. Such a god can be considered neither strange nor unwanted among the essential elements of a complete religion. In this universe of ours we may see the processes of creation sustentation and destruction always going on side by side. We surely cannot think of the world as being at any time free from decay if we could do that the world would certainly cease to be what it is. I don't know if there is any poet who can command a sufficiently strong and clear imagination to portray

the condition of the world as altogether unassociated with destruction and dissolution. If destruction disappears from the midst of the world there would be no room in it at all for renovation. And will not most young men protest against such a situation? The stage of the world would then be quite fully occupied by very superfluous veterans and when the world's stage becomes so overhordened with exhausted veterans, the young men can surely have no scope there for life and for growth. Naturally the condition of the world would then be very different—so different indeed as to be quite incapable of being consistently conceived. Destruction is thus an essential element in the universe as we know it. Whether it is possible to have a universe without destruction and decay therein is a question which we need not at present discuss, for we know only one universe and there can be no good at all in troubling ourselves about the possibility or otherwise of another way of organising another universe. Let us take into consideration the one only universe which we know—that wherein we have to live from day to day, even as we have to die when the hour for it comes, and this universe is characterised by decay and destruction. Destruction is as essential a part therein as creation and sustentation are. Hence—to whom this essential function of destruction is to be assigned—is a question which philosophy has every right to ask. And the fierce Rudra as Śiva came to be recognised as the most competent god to take upon himself the responsibility for performing this function of destruction in the universe.

Then there is the work of sustentation to be performed and looked after in the universe. Some god must take care of that work. With the idea underlying the conception of god Vishno there

came to be the association, as you know, of the idea of the Bhagavat. There had thus come into existence the conception of a god as an all-pervading source of light and life, of a god who, occupying the supremest position in the universe, is ever helpful to mankind as the bestower of beneficial powers and gifts and blessings on them. As Vishnu became such a god, it was quite natural that he was made responsible for looking after the work of sustentation in the universe. In the midst of the birth, decay and death which are everywhere evident in the universe, we also see that things endure in a more or less marked condition of steady well-being for shorter or longer intervals of time. It is this endurance of things in the condition of comparative well-being that has been designated as sustentation. And the god who has to look after such a function of sustentation must obviously be a god of love. The creating god Brahma has merely to deal out the barest justice to all beings in accordance with the law of *Dharma*. The importance of this function of Brahma in the universe cannot at all be gainsaid, but his function is not designed to make him a suitable object of either religious fear or religious love. In the manner in which the fierce Rudra became quite appropriately the destroying god and an object of religious fear to his worshippers, Vishnu became equally appropriately the protecting god and an object of religious love to his worshippers. Siva as the austere god of fear and unrelenting rigor could easily become Mahadeva or the great god among the people. But Vishnu alone could be always *Santakara* full of peace and benignity so as to love his worshippers and be really loved by them in return.

In this way the functions of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity became distributed among them. At any rate I can offer no better explana-

tion of why Brahma became the creator Rudra the destroyer and Vishnu the protector. Old Vedic tradition and comparatively later philosophic thought thus gave rise to the religion of the *Trimurtis*. This religion was however from the very beginning lacking in the element of finality even for the time being as its three gods were looked upon as mere functional aspects of the one only God of the universe the God of all gods. It is the tendency of the aspiration of religion to look up always and to endeavour to rise to higher and higher levels of worship and realization. Therefore after conceiving the one only God the universe in whom there has to be the natural and final synthesis of all the other gods the heart of the worshipper cannot help rise if he is ever called upon to worship any being who is in any manner less than the sublime and almighty oneness of the one only God the God of all gods. Siva and Vishnu who had already become popular gods rose under this impulse to represent the one only God of true philosophy inasmuch as popular imagination and its predilections and prejudices would not very naturally be in favour of the adoption of an entirely new deity to represent this one only God of philosophy. Indeed Saivism and Vaishnavism appear in this light in the *Mahabharata* although we cannot fail to notice therein a very marked tendency in favour of looking upon Vishnu as the one only God of true philosophy. It is true that our great poet Kalidasa was not a narrowly sectarian bigot in his worship of Siva as the Supreme God but we cannot therefore say that he was unaware of Vaishnavism as an independent religion in which Vishnu happened to be the Supreme God. By the time the gradual growth of the *Mahabharata* came to its end Saivism and Vaishnavism had already assumed their distinctive shapes and had come to be accepted among the

people as different forms of one and the same religion derived from the same scriptural and philosophic sources

In the meanwhile that is in the interval between the grand climacteric of *Upanishadic* thought and the culmination of the age long growth of the *Mahabharata* a new force of great significance came into existence in the religious and social atmosphere of Indian civilization and that is none other than the momentous force of Buddhism. Buddhism was really a revolt against the aristocratic isolation of the Brahminical priests and their monopoly to serve as the clergy that is as authorised teachers of religion and philosophy. When a revolt against any established order of institutions is started it is found in the history of all countries and civilizations that the revolt as revolt invariable goes too far. Indeed the process is comparable to the oscillation of the pendulum in this respect men first go to one extreme in one direction and then they go to the other extreme in the opposite direction. Since Buddhism operated as a revolt against the excesses of Brahminical sacerdotalism and clerical monopoly Gautama the Buddha tried to establish beyond doubt that he was as much entitled to be a teacher of religion as any Brahmin born and taught that the mechanical religions of over formal ceremonialism and life taking sacrifices does nothing more than merely cause unjustifiable injury to innocent animal life. He felt sincerely that such a religion cannot purify a man's life cannot satisfy the deep spiritual longings of his heart and cannot make his life's burden of sorrows and sufferings lighter or his hope of final freedom and salvation surer and more cheerful. In accordance with the tendency of the age the Buddhist revolt itself had to be based upon and guided by philosophic speculation and

the philosophy on which it was accordingly based is now recognized by most scholars to have been derived from the luminous and inspiring thoughts contained in the *Upanishads* and probably also from some of the later systems of philosophy built up with their aid. We have both *Saṅkhya* and *Yoga* elements in Buddhistic philosophy and also a large number of ideas and doctrines directly traceable to the *Upanishads*. The most notable feature in Buddhistic philosophy is that it does not cause men to trouble themselves about the question of the final philosophic reality. It does not ask—Is there a God and if there is what is His relation to the universe? This aspect of philosophy, Buddhism purposely ignored. It started with the proposition that life in this world is ever full of sorrow and pain and misery and that to get out of such a life of grief and pain and misery once for all so as to go back to it no more has to be the chief purpose of life—its very *summum bonum*.

How is this purpose to be accomplished? The problem is one of practical ethics and its solution was found out to be in the annihilation of *trishna*—of the thirsting after the pleasing objects of the senses and the agreeable delights of life. It is this *trishna* or thirsting after the pleasing things of life which is declared to be really responsible for the bondage of life—I won't say for the bondage of the soul because the question of the soul appears to have been left undecided in Buddhism. If we get rid of this *trishna* we get rid of bondage and then we become free. And what becomes of us when we so become free? We attain *nirvana* as the Buddhists say. But Buddhistic *nirvana* is not in all respects the same as the Hindu salvation of *moksha*. On the attainment of *nirvana* man's continuously recurring mundane life of pain

sorrow and misery—of birth, growth and decay and death—is declared to disappear altogether. What there will be after all this misery disappears, Buddha does not want people to enquire into and examine. His ideal lay altogether in practical ethical life. Look to the ethical life. don't waste your time in vain metaphysical wranglings regarding the nature of the *Brahman* or the destiny of the soul—he is known to have declared more than once. Whether the soul is real whether it is something separate and apart from or the same as God he did not care to consider. These discussions are after all, such as cannot lead to anything like really final and irrefutable conclusions. Indeed we cannot satisfactorily solve these metaphysical problems and give to their solutions the character of finality. Philosophy would cease to be philosophy if there were to be real finality about all its conclusions and Buddha obviously thought that this absence of finality made metaphysical discussions useless for the practical guidance of life. There may or may not be a *Brahman* and this *Brahman* may or may not be related to the universe. We may or may not have a soul that remains and endures even after the attainment of *nirvana*. These problems were to him practically insignificant. His concern evidently was to free human life from the net of overwrought metaphysics as much as from the redundant overgrowth of ritualism and to make it practically pure blissful and serene. Such is a brief statement of the more important aims of Buddhism. You may see here how in his revolt Buddha went to the other extreme. It is true he has not denied God. He has not denied the soul either. But he has distinctly told all those that seek guidance from him that there is no good in trying to solve problems about God and the soul and that

ceremonial worship and sacrifice as elements of religion and aids to conduct are very much worse than meaningless mockery.

That is how Buddha's work came to figure in the field of Indian religion, and he naturally interfered with the even progress of old Hindu thought. He had therefore to be met. After Buddha his followers laboured with exemplary zeal to make his religion spread. Although they took much sincere and earnest trouble their work like that of all propagandist workers, made them indulge rather freely in that kind of low activity in which their chief aim turned out to be not so much to spread the good teachings of Buddha in regard to the necessity of making human life here on earth pure, selfless, holy and helpful as to see that other religions were subjected to bare criticism and were made to lose their influence in the world. They therefore, freely found fault with the ancient Vedic religion of the Hindus. Some of the old criticisms of the Buddhists are even now repeated by other modern critics of Hindu religion and Hindu scriptures. The attempt to meet these criticisms in earnest gave rise to a religious revival among the Hindus. In the case of this revival of Hinduism also the process was indeed like the oscillation of the pendulum. When Buddhism went to one extreme the Brahminical revival went to the other. When Hinduism started afresh to assert itself against Buddhist opposition it was the *Mīmāṃsaka* who at first came forward to vindicate the Hindu religion. He relied upon and worked for establishing the infallible authority of the Vedas. According to him the Vedas are self-produced and eternal they are not the result of any inspired vision of any seer they are not even revelation which is limited in time but they are eternal and self-existent they

have always been and will ever be. With the aid of such an eternal, self-existent and infallible Veda, it was his aim not so much to establish any form of theistic ethics and rational religious worship, as to resuscitate the nearly dead ritualism of the old Vedic religion with its many and multiform sacrifices. That was the position which the *Minum saka* held. It was on this ground that he took his stand against the Buddhist. But we know that such a position resting solely upon the eternality and infallible authority of the Vedas cannot be made to tell effectively against the purely ethical practical position taken up by the great humanitarian teacher Buddha. When the argument of the *Minum saka* against the Buddhist critics could not thus have the desired effect in rehabilitating Hinduism then there arose the necessity of meeting philosophy by philosophy and ethics by ethics. This could be done quite easily because the human heart cannot go on for ever in pleased satisfaction with a religion that does not take God into consideration and does not take the soul and its final destiny into consideration. The religion that entirely relies upon a more or less empirically determined discipline of ethical conduct in life must be from the very nature of the case an unsatisfying religion. My beloved and esteemed friend in the chair will I am sure corroborate me when I give expression to the view that the true foundation of all enduring ethics has to be found in metaphysics. That ethics which is not founded upon metaphysics is certain to be shaky ethics. That is what I understand all true philosophy to teach. That is also what the human heart evidently feels from its very bottom. It is all very well to say that our lives must be pure and unselfish and sinless. But why should they be so? We are all prone to know the better and do the worse. As St Paul has put it there is a double nature in every one

of us. There is a certain something in us which always prompts us to do that which is right and good and there is also a certain something else in us which prompts us to do what is not right and good. Between these two prompting forces in the heart of man—there is a struggle going on incessantly. If in the course of this constant struggle the force prompting us to do the right is not supported strongly by religion and by philosophy then naturally the force which prompts us to do the wrong will overpower us and make our lives altogether faulty and unworthy. Even with the aid of the support derived from the helping hand of philosophy and religion do not so many of us give way before the force which always tempts us to do evil? Therefore this purely ethical and agnostic and empirical religion could not satisfy all the religious cravings of the human heart. It could not uphold religion and morality so sufficiently or so completely rationally as to make them stand on their own legs and enable us to declare with the unfailing authority of reality that the life of righteousness is alone for ever the proper life for man.

Accordingly it became necessary that the religion which strove from a theistic standpoint to counteract the agnostic influence of Buddhism should address itself to the work of making the authoritative commandment and justification of morality and unselfishness more satisfactory than Buddhism could ever prove them to be. The work of the *Mīmāṃsālas* in establishing the divine authority of the Vedas and their everlasting character could not as we have seen give rise to this result. And so something else had to be done to bring about such a result and thereby establish the high value and worthiness of Hindu scriptures and

Hindu tradition in vindicating morality and in satisfying all the high spiritual requirements of religion. This work had necessarily to be done and it was taken up by Sankaracharya in right earnest. That such was the need of the hour had been made out by the famous Gaudapada charya even before the time of Sankara. Indeed Gaudapada had already succeeded in formulating a scheme of thought whereby the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism might very well be evolved out of the *Upanishadic* metaphysics of Hinduism. Many of us are not conscious of the manner in which we are hour after hour moulded by our environments and often enough we feel that we are absolutely free agents in all that we think and do. But if we carefully examine the processes of history with a view to find out why it is that in one and the same country the leading men of one age think in one manner, while those of another age think in a different manner we are sure to find out that there are natural forces which tend to produce such variations in thought and aim. It is in consequence of these forces that they think and act as they do in history. If we bear this well in mind we may quite easily discern how very unconsciously Gaudapada and Sankara must have adopted the line of reasoning they did for the purpose of overcoming the unwholesome sceptic effects of the agnosticism of the Buddhists. One of the chief ends to be gained in this conflict was the establishment of the authority of the Vedas which meant the same thing as the establishment of the authoritativeness of the old long cherished religious thoughts and traditions of the country. Another such object was to derive that same purity and sinlessness and selflessness of life as was advocated by Buddha from the teachings of our

old Vedic and Vedantic religion. These are indeed among the practical historical results of the philosophical doctrines taught by Sankara Acharya. During his all too short period of life his thoughts as a philosopher and his work as a religious reformer produced very marked and momentous results. While accepting the *Mimamsa*'s views regarding the eternality and infallibility of the sacred scriptures of the Hindus Sankara had to contend against his exaggerated faith in the sacerdotal ceremonialism of the Vedas. There is very good evidence to show that he fought this fight with very remarkable success. On the strength of the eternality and infallibility of the Vedas he had further to establish that the agnostic ethics and humanitarianism of Buddhism though very high in their then moral value were really inferior to Vedantic ethics and Vedantic humanitarianism. How well he accomplished this the later history of Buddhism in India abundantly demonstrates. In the course of his endeavour to re-establish Hinduism unshakably on its ancient foundations he of course worked most nobly and heroically for purity as well as unity in human life and human society.

If he had lived longer he might have given us much more of the treasure of his thoughts and might have enlightened many more dark corners in the great field of Indian philosophy and Hindu religious aspiration. And yet what he did in the short span of his life is more than enough to immortalize him a thousand times. His great success in carrying out the object which he obviously had in view is evident from the fact that his teachings put an end to the effective opposition of Buddhism against Hinduism and promoted in a notable manner the forward progress of Hinduism along the lines

of a highly improved ethical universalism. His object was evidently to win back those pious and earnest and thoughtful people, who had strayed away from the old fold of Hindu religious tradition and Hindu philosophic thought. Consequently Sankaracharya's religion had to be based on the philosophical foundation of the higher pantheistic monism and it thus, became pre-eminently the religion of *jnanin*. His teaching is, as you know that the Supreme *Brahman* is identical with the soul and that everything in the phenomenal universe is an illusory manifestation of that *Brahman* who is in fact the one only reality. Such being the position of Sankaracharya he had naturally to propound highly metaphysical problems and theories and had to prove that the soul is in fact part of this one great reality in the universe and that becoming absorbed into it in the end is indeed the great salvation of *moksha*. When that aim of becoming absorbed into *Brahman* is accomplished souls get out of the bondage of *samsara* at once and as a matter of course and in this state of *moksha* every soul comes to its own enjoyment of unlimited light and eternal bliss and peace. It is not difficult to make out how these teachings of his tend to give a firmer and more rational metaphysical foundation even for Buddhistic ethics. In this we have the greatest historical achievement to be placed to the credit of Sankaracharya. He saw and made others also see distinctly that the moral fruits of pure-Buddhistic life were more fully capable of being derived from Vedantic Hinduism. When this became evident how could Buddhistic critics decry any longer the old religion of the Hindus with justice? When before Sankaracharya the *Mimamsaka* had worked effectively to establish the eternal and infallible character of the Vedas,

and when Sankaracharya later on demonstrated the high ethical value and humanitarian purpose of the teachings contained in those same Vedas the position of the religion of the Hindus as founded upon their ancient scriptures became altogether impregnable. It certainly cannot be amiss to point out here that there is very good evidence in the writings of Sankaracharya to indicate that he was himself an ardent Vaishnava—he may well be made out to have been a great Bhagavata. Although his achievements in relation to the great work of strengthening the philosophical fortifications of Vedantic Hinduism have been comprehensively general and non-sectarian in character it is abundantly clear that he must have felt that his higher pantheistic monism was in no way seriously incompatible with Vaishnavism even in its form as the accepted religion of the ancient Bhagavatas.

It has however to be observed that the large body of the Hindus in the country could not easily comprehend Sankaracharya's Vedantic religion since it was too philosophical for the common human mind. The common man could not indeed derive sufficient religious satisfaction from it. His need even then was to have a God who would love him who would come to help him and render protection unto him when ever he got into difficulties—a God at whose feet he might throw himself unreservedly so that He in His divine wisdom might do with him what ever He chose. The sense of man's dependence upon God, his instinct of love to God and his felt need for an always unfailing divine support could not be easily satisfied by the sublimely impersonal God of Sankara's pantheistic monism. What wonder if soon afterwards there arose among the people the desire to see where else they could obtain their religious satisfaction? The

old religion of the Hindus was distinctly marked by the supreme dominance of a loving and saving divine personality in it. Even before Buddhism there was as it appears the religion of the Hindu Trinity. And after Buddhism lost its great influence in India the popular position of Vedantic Hinduism became very highly improved. This religion had by that time been proved to be in no way inferior to Buddhism or any other religion in the matter of establishing the obligatoriness of pure ethical conduct as based on sinlessness and selflessness in life. And yet the need was felt for a personal God and for a more emotional and less intellectual religion than that of Sankara. This more emotional and less intellectual religion had in fact been known well to the people of India before. Such a religion is clearly traceable in the pages of the *Malabharata* and in the *Puranas*. And after Buddhism and Sankaracharya this old emotional religion was felt to be more and more wanted. Accordingly religious reformers arose and came forward to supply the felt need of the hour. Among those who so arose in India to give this needed emotional turn to the reestablished and freshly progressive Hindu religion Ramanujacharya certainly played a very important part and produced very notable results as a fearless and faithful worker in the field of Hindu religion and social reform. There have been others who also endeavoured in their days to do this kind of work but among all such Ramanujacharya may be made out to have been undoubtedly the most famous and fruitful worker. Ramanujacharya had of course his predecessors who had prepared the way for him as the history of the Sri Vaishnava religion distinctly shows. And in carrying out this requisite reform in Hindu religion that is in making it a religion of living devotion

to an all powerful and all merciful God what Ramannja mainly did was that he combined the old religious views of the Bhagavats with the Vedantic ideas of Sankara's higher pantheism so as to make his *advaita* or absolute non dualism become *visishtadvaita* or qualified non dualism. Ramannja's aim was evidently to emphasise the religious value of devotion and service and self surrender to God but not to make the realization of the oneness of God with the soul of man and with the universe the basis for moral conduct and the means for the attainment of the sublime salvation of *moksha*. The need for moral conduct for purity for sinlessness and for selflessness in life has been believed in and proclaimed by all great religious teachers in India as in every other part of the world. But they have differed as to the question of how this sinless life is to be realised in practice. Is it to be made dependent upon spiritual and philosophical realisation or is it to be made dependent upon the culture of the tender and benevolent emotions has in fact been the practical problem at issue. There can be no doubt that both the processes are capable of yielding the fine fruit of pure and noble conduct. However to most men and women the culture of the emotions happens to be easier than the achievement of spiritual and philosophic realisation.

Ramannajacharya accordingly declared *bhakti* to be the most suitable means to achieve purity sinlessness and selflessness in life and hence this same *bhakti* was according to him the truest and the most unfailing means for the attainment of the salvation of *moksha*. The emotion of *bhakti* is said to be a feeling akin to love it is indeed deep devotion and love. Even in our common daily life we may very well realize what

a potent factor love is in encouraging morality and in establishing purity and selflessness and selflessness in life. Imagine a young man who is entirely absorbed in himself who does not care to think of anybody or anything other than himself—imagine further that either as in India or in the fashion of Europeans he marries a beautiful and worthy damsel and becomes day after day more and more attached to her in love. Suppose this young man of the above description goes to the Bangalore fruit market and sees rows of fine luscious fruits exposed for sale there. His mouth of course waters and he buys some choice fruits among them. Does he eat them himself? He would probably have done so in those old self-centred days of his uniquely single blessedness. He does not and cannot do so now for his love to his wife is so true and so deep that although at the very sight of the fruits his own mouth profusely watered he carries them home to his wife and gives them to her in preference to himself. And if in course of time he becomes the father of a number of children and then goes again to the same market and sees similar fruits his mouth probably will not then water at all. He will have by that time become too much of an altruist that is too much of a true lover of others and his mouth will surely have learnt not to water on seeing even the best of fruits. Nevertheless he is certain to buy the fruits in the belief that those fruits will be even more delicious and agreeable to his children than they were to him in those old days when his mouth freely and fearlessly watered in his own interest at the sight of the sweet fruits. He buys them and takes them home. To whom does he give them now? Evidently not to his wife who is now to him no more than the worthy and respectable mother of his dear

children. But he gives them to the children. This clearly shows how potent love is in expanding our sympathies and in killing our selfishness. And by killing selfishness we in fact kill all that is calculated to encourage sinfulness and impurity in us. With the disappearance of selfishness every temptation that tends to make our lives unrighteous and faulty disappears at once. In this way love may be made not to be a very potent factor in giving rise to purity and unselfishness in life. If this feeling of love is steadily and carefully cultivated in the human heart if it is made to find its object not merely in the wife and the children but in that great Being who is the very life and foundation of the universe and from whom come all that is good and true and beautiful in the universe if that Being is made the object of our love then there will arise as they put it in Sanskrit *anuragaduraga*—that is through intense attainment to that Divine Being there will arise in us absolute non attachment to ourselves.

This idea is sometimes illustrated in Hindu literature by taking the example of an uncontrollable illegitimate attachment which a man may have to a mistress although he is morally bound to bestow on his own wedded wife all his love and attachment. As his illegitimate love grows in intensity that is as the object of his illegitimate love becomes more and more dear to him his lawfully wedded wife may be seen to be discarded by him more and more. Thus his *uraga* or want of attachment to the wedded wife bears an inverse ratio to his *anuraga* or loving attachment to the illegitimate mistress. This example is not a very happy one morally never the less as an illustration it is very telling. And what I want you to understand from it is that if we make God the object of all our

attachment then everything else ceases in time to have the power of attracting nor love. With the growth of such a full God love in us, our love of pleasure of wealth of beauty and of power disappears like mist before the rising sun. The only love that then endures is our love of God. And the full import of this God love depends upon our conception of God. If it be realised that everything that is in the universe has come from Him and in due time goes back to Him—if such is the conception which we have of God—then when He becomes the object of our love all His creatures also become the objects of our love as a matter of course. How will it be possible for us to live a life of selfishness when God and all His creatures have thus become the objects of our true and devoted love? Such a thing is indeed impossible. We cannot love God and His creatures sincerely and love also at the same time our own sweet little selves. The love of many sweet little self fades away to the larger presence of the love of God and His creatures. Here therefore is an efficient and worthy means placed at the disposal of man by which he may overcome his tendencies in favour of selfishness and sinfulness—and that means is man's loving devotion to God which is in Hinduism known by the name of *bhakti*. Here also *anuraga* or loving attachment to God and all His creatures gives rise to *viraga* or the feeling of non attachment to relation to one's self. It is not merely that love expands our sympathies and kills our selfishness—love indeed does more—it stimulates in us self sacrifice and impels us to wear ourselves away cheerfully in serving those whom we love. Our love of God—when it is indeed real and hearty—is fully capable of turning us into earnest and sincere servants of all His creatures. In fact it is in

serving His creatures that our love of God finds its satisfaction and makes itself alive and visible. And it is actually maintained in the Sri-Vaishnavism of Ramanoja that to love and honour and serve the Bhagavatas is even more meritorious than to worship the Bhagavat. Loving devotion to God has been and is undoubtedly a great moral force in human history.

Thus with the aid of *bhakti* we may annihilate selfishness, and thereby realise *moksha*. The obligatoriness of *bhakti* is, therefore, an unfailing authority in favour of pure ethical conduct and high nobility of purpose: it is indeed an unfailing means to help us always to attain real success in living the righteous life. Moreover it is easier for us to command *bhakti* than to obtain that transcendental spiritual wisdom and the realisation of the unity of reality which Sankaracharya's philosophy demands of all its followers. The tendency to love is altogether natural and is implanted in the heart of all persons. There is in fact no person of any kind who has not a natural aptitude to love and to be moved by love. The only point to be attended to in respect of this natural emotion of love is to make it expand so widely and so comprehensively that it may have the great God Himself and all His creatures for its object. And the tendency of love to have itself lavished upon the beloved is very frequently seen to be against the conception of absolute oneness between the lover and his beloved. The function of philosophy consists largely in realising the unity of reality, while that of *bhakti* or the emotion of God-love and divine devotion is in the realisation of union through service and self-sacrifice. When it is found that the path of *bhakti* leads the devotees of God more easily and more naturally to the

attainment of *moksha* through the realised relation of God union, than the path of wisdom or *jnana* does through the realisation of oneness with God, then as a matter of course the easier path of *bhakti* will be followed by many so as to make it become the really popular road of religious aspiration and attainment. Ramanujacharya, whose aim obviously was to make as many as possible come under the saving influence of God-love as comprehended in Vaishnavism, made *bhakti* the basis of all religious life, and to him *jnana* itself came to mean the same thing as *bhakti*. In fact it is in this light that he has interpreted *Vedanta Sūtras* of Bādarāyana. Accordingly, making *bhakti* as before the pivot of popular religion was one of the most important points in the life work of Ramanujacharya. It is fully worthwhile noting here that the Sanskrit words, *bhaga*, *bhagavat*, and *bhakti* are all of the same origin etymologically, and it cannot therefore be an altogether unfounded assumption to hold that the word *bhakti* must have almost from the very commencement of its religious history in the Sanskrit language meant the means of worshipping Bhagavat in the spirit of true love and devotion as the one Supreme Lord, the God of all gods. There is other evidence also to prove that the doctrine of *bhakti* is undoubtedly an ancient element in the religion of the Bhagavatas. Anyhow there can be no doubt that the all pervading and all enlivening Vishnu, who, as Bhagavat, is the loving bestower of all auspicious boons and blessings, and is, as Narayana, the abode of all life and the internal controller—*antaryāmin*—of all beings is most appropriately approached through *bhakti*. The most glorious delight of love is ever in experiencing the response of love to love. Therefore to a loving God, what can be more delightful than

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the confident and trustful love with which His devotees respond to His love? And is not Vishno, the bestower of light and life and of all auspicious boons and blessings, a loving God? When we think of our own unworthiness to be the objects of His love, and contrast it with His infinite benevolence and the immense value of all His divine gifts, how can we conceive Him to be other than a really loving God? On the certainty of His all-merciful and omnipotent love is based another doctrine of the Sri-Vaishnavas, which is closely allied to the doctrine of *bhakti* and may even be said to be a natural development of it. I refer to the doctrine of *prapatti* or absolute self-surrender to God, which is also spoken sometimes as *saranagati*. This doctrine of self-surrender is based mainly on the last teaching given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgita*, and it is hence held to be as authoritative as the *Gita* itself. I told you a little while ago that there are some modern philosophers also who maintain that man's sense of dependence on a higher power has to be an essential element in all religions. Whether it really has to be so or not, we need not discuss now. But it is evident that the doctrine of *prapatti* is based on such a sense of dependence on God—a dependence which is complete and unquestioningly trustful. Ramanuja's views regarding this doctrine come out most beautifully from his *Saranagati-gadya*, which is a highly pathetic prayer in Sanskrit prose embodying his great faith in God as his sole refuge and only Saviour.

There is another point in the work of Ramanuja in connection with Vaishnavism, which is brought prominently in view by the name Sri Vaishnavism, which has been given to the religion he taught and upheld. It is sometimes called Vaishnavism of the *Sri sampradaya*. Rama-

ruja's religion has been called Sri Vaishnavism, because Sri that is the goddess Lakshmi, is made to have an important function to perform in it. When man by means of his *bhakti* endeavours to attain *molsha* it is found that he often feels helpless and hopelessly forlorn on account of his knowledge of his own culpable unworthiness to be blessed with the salvation of soul emancipation and God attainment as also on account of his very natural conception of God as a just and impartial apportioner of the fruits of *harma* to all His creatures. When we deal with a great question of religion and morality like the fitness of God's creatures to be saved and lifted out of the thralldom of *samsara* and base its solution on our metaphysical conceptions of God and of the will of God we cannot help thinking of Him as a hard taskmaster who is systematically bent upon seeing that all His commandments are duly obeyed by all His creatures and that his will is always honoured by them as law. With such an absolutely just God who is very rightly and very naturally apt to become deeply disappointed with us whenever we violate His commandments our chances of attaining salvation are indeed infinitely small. When we calmly measure our own capacity to conduct our lives in complete consonance with the will of God the result is certain to fill us all with great despondency. Since the moral law is based upon the will of God we are all bound to live our lives in accordance with the moral law. But when the weakness that is in us nonerves us and we become a prey to temptation how can we then manage to live the life that is morally faultless? And if we break down under the heavy presence of trying temptations are we thereafter to have no hope of any kind regarding the attainment of the

bliss of soul salvation.* In this manner we are led to face the old problem of how the mercy of the loving God may be reconciled with the strict impartiality of the absolutely just God. It is in a situation like this that we naturally feel the need for the kindly interposition of a suitable intermediary between us and our great God—an intermediary who on the one hand is willing and able to excuse our faults and can on the other hand effectively approach our almighty God with the petition for mercy on behalf of His weak and erring creatures. It is not here in India alone that the help of such an intermediary has been sought by pious and God-fearing people. Other religions also than this Sri Vaishnavism seek and postulate an interceder between God and man between the ever just and almighty God and the weak and erring human being so that this weak and erring being may be made to have the full benefit of divine mercy. Some make their religious Guru such an interceder, others like the Christians make a divine incarnation serve as such an interceder and Sri Vaishnavism looks upon Lakshmi, the Divine Mother of the Universe as such an interceder. To bear well and without harm the burden of moral and religious responsibility belonging to weak and erring mankind some such interceder between the judging God and the human beings to be judged is very rightly recognised to be necessary by more than one well known religion. Now is the religion taught by Ramana Acharya this interceder is as you have been already told the goddess Lakshmi. The conception of Lakshmi as the divine consort of Vishnu is also an old one in Hindu religion. It is known to later Vedic literature and has a philosophical meaning underlying it—this meaning being nothing other than the true representation of the relation

between *prakṛiti* and *Paramapurusha*. *Prakṛiti* is conceived to be the wife of God who is the Supreme Being. According to what is called some *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya*—which is the same as the *Sāṅkhya* of Kapila with the exception that in the *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya* a Supreme Soul is postulated and made to have the same relation to the universe as a whole as the various individual souls have to their respective embodiments—according to this *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya* it is maintained that *prakṛiti* which is in fact the source of the created universe is obedient to the will of the Supreme Soul and gives birth to the universe in consequence of its close association with it. Hence *prakṛiti* is looked upon as the wife of God and the Mother of the Universe. Both Vaishnavism and Saivism have recognised the appropriateness of this conception of the relation between God and Nature and in Saivism we have *prakṛiti* and *Paramapurusha* even blended together in conception of the *Ardhanārīśvara*—the God who is represented as half man and half woman. If we understand that Lakshmi represents in Vaishnavism the power of *prakṛiti* we may easily make out the meaning and fitness of the function assigned to her in Sri Vaishnavism. Even according to the *Sāṅkhya* of Kapila *prakṛiti* is conceived to undergo all her modifications with a view to liberate all bound souls from their imprisonment in matter and is for this reason compared to a kind and loving mother. In *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya* Mother Nature happens thus to be the obedient and loving consort of Father God. Please note here that the feminine gender of the word *prakṛiti* in Sanskrit has not been without its influence in making Nature the kindly Mother of All even as God is the great Father of All. Looked at in this light what does the propitiation of Lakshmi really signify?

It means this—that before we succeed in propitiating our God who is above and beyond Nature it is necessary for us to propitiate Nature if we are indeed anxious to get on well in life as well as after life. Those who want to live their lives happily and harmoniously for themselves and for others have to see that they do not foolishly violate the laws or oppose the irresistible forces of Nature. Hence the propitiation of the powers of Nature is always required in our own interest. Our ancestors of thousands of years ago achieved marked progress in religion by passing from Nature to Nature's God. In Ramanuja's *Visishtadvaita* philosophy the oneness of the ultimate reality is not the result of any form of essential identity but is based upon an organic union of the component entities making up the reality. Hence according to him the path of philosophic ascent is inevitably from Nature to Nature's God. And the function of mercy seeking intercession in behalf of weak man which is assigned in Sri Vaishnavism to Lakshmi, the merciful Mother of All enables us to see further that in Ramanuja's view the path of religious realisations also is in proceeding from Nature to Nature's God.

When philosophy taught our ancient sages how to analyse the universe and their constructive imagination led them to conceive the relation between God and Nature to be like that between a husband and his wife it became perfectly natural for Vaishnavism to make Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu and the merciful Mother of the Universe. You know that the progress of religion takes place not unoften by the infusion of new ideas into old institutions. A great Arabic scholar writing about the religions of the Semites pointed out some years ago with many examples the tendency that there is in human societies to conceive their divinities almost unconsciously in

the light of their own social organizations. If we have a community of people whose society is matriarchal in organisation and among whom the mother is therefore the most prominent person in the family their most natural conception of the deity happens to be as a goddess. They look upon the high supernatural being or beings at whose hands they seek sympathy and support as a mother. In other communities wherein the social organisation is patriarchal where the father is the most authoritative figure in the family, the divine being is looked upon as a father. This state of affairs in human civilisation is indeed very well known to students of anthropology. And we are able to make out with various kinds of evidence that the Dravidian people of South India possessed in the early days a matriarchal organisation of society that among them the mother was accordingly the most important figure in the family and that consequently the worship of the village goddess as *amman*—that is as mother—came to be very prevalent among them. If we have a people among whom goddess worship is prevalent and if we want to introduce in their midst a newer and a higher religion it turns out to be necessary to find a real place for a great goddess in that newer and higher religion. This was probably one of the reasons which led to the enthronement of Lakshmi in the religion of Ramanujacharya as the word *Merciful Mother* who is the ever loving and ever successful mediatrix between Her Lord God and the individual souls seeking the salvation of a perfected reunion with Him. Ramanuja's predecessors in the line of Sri Vaishnava teachers had already given a prominent place to Lakshmi in their religion probably because it happened to be a characteristic feature of Sri Vaishnavism that it arose the Tamil land

and obtained its fresh nourishment largely from the inspired thoughts and sentiments of certain well known Tamil poets and saints. The thought influences proceeding from these poets and saints were taken up by Brahminical teachers and were woven into the philosophy of Vaishnav Vedanta in a very remarkable manner. Such a mutual weaving of pious poetry and sublime philosophy is probably not seen in the literature of any other religion. The Sri Vaishnavas often speak of their sacred literature as *Ubhaya Vedanta* that is as a double Vedanta consisting of the Sanskrit philosophic Vedanta and the Tamil poetic Vedanta. And the association of Lakshmi or Sri with Vishnu as the intermediary between weak man and almighty God must also have been postulated in this manner in response to popular needs and influences and it led to various consequences. Thus it is in all probability that Vaishnavism became here a religion in which Mother Lakshmi has to intercede for mercy between God and His children. And who are His Children? All mankind—nay all living beings. If all mankind happen to be His children and if Mother Lakshmi intercedes between weak and suffering mankind on the one hand and almighty God on the other we can easily understand how in this religion none can be kept out of the Holy of Holies and none can be looked upon as unworthy to receive the grace of God. If out of a family of a number of children a mother keeps away any one child from sharing the kindly and merciful favour of the father she certainly deserves to be characterised as an unnatural mother. Therefore in this religion there is an all-comprehensive divine graciousness which knows no exclusion. The reciprocity and the universality of divine and human love as known to this religion has in no small measure been the result of the

Mother of All being made in it to intercede between God and all His children so as to temper His serene justice with tender mercy

I have thus tried to indicate to you in a very brief outline the position occupied by Ramanuja charya in the development of Sri Vaishnavism in our country. Vaishnavism when adopted by Ramanuja had already become Sri Vaishnavism. In it the old Bhagvata doctrine of salvation through *bhakti* had been reasserted and developed beyond into the doctrine of *prajati*. The decision to utilise the *Ubhaya Vedanta* to Sanskrit philosophy and Tamil Vaishnava poetry as the basis of Sri Vaishnavism had also been arrived at and practically carried out to a large extent by the predecessors of Ramanuja. Accordingly he was in no sense the pioneer of the popular religious movement out of which Sri Vaishnavism arose in South India. He may be said to have come on the crest of the wave of this movement and it received its final seal of authority and rational sanction at his hands. That he secured for it the full support of the Sanskrit Vedanta and proved it to be a worthy means for the exaltation of the social virtues and the uplifting of the masses is abundantly demonstrated by the events that filled his long life of courageous conviction and enduring sincerity and comprehensive humanity. Let me refer in illustration of this to the simple instance of his having admitted the *parayas*—the *lolejas* as you call them here—as worshippers into the famous Vishnu temple at Mellote which is as you all know situated within the Mysore State. The humanity and courage involved in this noble act are both highly remarkable and worthy of the enfranchising religious movement which attained its consummation through his work. After him others carried the stream of Vaishnava thought in various ways into various parts of this holy land

of ours and new forms of Vaishnava faith came into existence under new conditions. But these are matters which cannot be included within the scope of the present lecture. The popularisation of the ideas of the Fatherhood of God, the Motherhood of Lakshmi and the Brotherhood of Man in India is indeed to a notable degree due to Ramanuja and his work in life and it is now a fact of history that to this may be traced more or less largely the beneficent religious influences that have proceeded from Ramananda Kabir and Nanak. So far Ramanuja's work in connection with the immemorial and ever progressive religious life of India has shown itself to be like the work of the prescient sower who sows good seeds in good soil and we may therefore feel well assured that under the quickening stimulation of the heavenly light of God love the harvest of the love of man to man as man will in due time be quite abundant and full of further hope and further promise in this our ancient and historic country.

SRI MADHWACHARYA : HIS LIFE AND TIMES

By Mr C N. KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR, M A

CHAPTER I.

I—INTRODUCTORY

THE present state of Indian History being what it is no apology seems needed for *historic* sketches however humble their scope, so long as the subject treated of is comparatively unfamiliar. That it is so in the case of the Teacher, whose life it is here proposed to sketch, it is not hard to show.

For in South India, "from the seventh century onwards, if not earlier, there have been hundreds of saints and religious reformers laboring for the progress of 'Protestant Hinduism' and leaving more or less of tangible results behind. Of these, however, Sankara Ramannja and Madhwa, have had the special distinction of each associating his name permanently with a more or less well known system of philosophy, in addition to the religious and semi religious reforms their systems or the times severally called forth. Each has had accordingly a more or less influential following though Sankara, according to a recent estimate has nearly seventy five per cent of the Hindus still owning him as their guru.

But the comparative and historic method of study, which for over fifty years, has shown itself prominent in the West, and has still more recently been making its influence felt in our own country, does not estimate the importance of a system by the mere number of people who accept it or profess to follow it. It has got other tests and

other standards to go by and from one point of view all systems are alike useful for its mission. This being granted it is rather strange that Sri Madhwa and his philosophy should thus far have received but scant attention at the hands of scholars Western as well as Indian. Sankara and his system have thanks to German and other European savants as well as the Theosophic Agency been widely studied and estimated and admired while Ramanuja may also be assumed to have become fairly well known though not so widely known. The South Indian Vaishnavites at any rate who form his chief followers have shown themselves active in so many directions and some at least of the well known scholars of that community have by means of translations and otherwise tried to familiarise the general public with their beliefs and practices.

It is doubtful however so far as one is aware if the name of Madhwa as the Founder of no important system of philosophy is as yet a tenth as familiar to the reader of things in general in other parts of India or even to those who claim special acquaintance with Indian thought in the West. Apparently it is not for Max Müller once mentions it only to brush it lightly aside while Hunter for instance in his otherwise excellent account of Neo-Hinduism does not so much as make a bare mention of Madhwa or his system among the Vaishnavite Reformers. It may be freely granted that if the amount of following is the chief or sole index of the importance of a religious or philosophical system Madhwaism must take its place much below the *Chaitanyite* *Vallabhite* or *Kabirpanthi* or other forms of North Indian Vaishnavism. But it may well be doubted whether that is always the right kind of test in determining the intrinsic or relative worth of a system of philosophy. Any endeavour therefore which is

meant to draw the attention of the comparative student to the chief features of the Dvaita system of philosophy as fashioned by its best exponent as well as to the life and times of the Founder may be assumed to need no special excuse for its making

2.—SCOPE AND METHOD

For these reasons the present is a small attempt at showing in outline the life and times of Sri Madhwacharya and the main features of his philosophy. It is not proposed to discuss the latter at anything like adequate length or contrast it with other systems preceding or following it so as to assign to it its place in the history of philosophy. These must necessarily be left to much better equipped hands and to future specialists and research students. All that is meant here is to present in a general way the Teacher and his work on *strictly historical lines and for the general reader's benefit*. It is not directly addressed to the *guru's* followers—at any rate in the first instance and not certainly to such of them as are strictly orthodox. They need not and are not called upon to subscribe to the rational line which is here deliberately adopted and which will be strictly and scrupulously followed in the series of studies meant to describe the Lives and Times of the chief *gurus* of India.

It may be added however in passing and by way of explanation that the chief offence to the orthodox of every sect committed by the adoption of Rationalism in religious matters is the rejection among others of *miracles* popularly so called—those supernatural incidents which gather round the memory of every great person by the efforts of enemies as well as friends and which are addressed primarily to the vulgar and the credulous and are meant to magnify the founder in their eyes. The intelligent reader will easily analyse some of these

and find that they all run in certain common grooves the most marvellous and astounding among them concerning themselves as a rule with the sternest facts in every man's life—his birth and exit. Now the historic presentation consistently and deliberately rejects miracles for the simple reason that what is history cannot be supernatural, and what is supernatural cannot be history.

At the same time the rationalistic and historic spirit does not run a muck and absolutely exclude the heroic nature of great men of thought or action. It will therefore be found that in narrating the story of Madhwa's life his claim to originality is folly conceded while at the same time some account is also taken of the somewhat vague notions—discomforting doubts of hitherto accepted doctrines—which were prevalent at or before the time of his advent and which assuredly prepared the way for the acceptance of his message.

3—SOURCES

In the absence of any contemporary historical accounts the lives of most of the gurus and so of Madhwa among others have necessarily to be extracted from other sources more or less indirect and necessarily imperfect—from their own works if they have left any from the semi-mythical accounts which have come down to us in fragments or in compilations from their own disciples or their immediate followers from songs or indirect references in other quarters and from Sanskrit inscriptions and the like where these are available.

Now in Sri Madhwa's case we have undoubtedly a large collection of his own works at our disposal. The present writer however does not pretend to have studied any of them—at any rate in the original—in the historic or any other

spirit. He therefore ventures to hope that the enlightened among his followers will undertake it as a labour of love and add to the historic interpretation of the Gurus' teachings though for purposes of *h a life* it is to be feared that no material addition can be made from this source, this kind of literature being necessarily philosophic and impersonal*.

Next there are two compilations professing to tell the story of the Guru's life and work. These are *Madhwa Vyaya* and *Manimanyari*—two compilations in verse—proceeding from Pandit Narayan Acharya son of Pandit Trivikrama Acharya one of the greatest of Madhwa's converts. It need hardly be said that these are more *puranic* than historic and being composed in a thoroughly orthodox spirit require very careful handling for historic purposes. But such as they are they form the main basis of this sketch because it is a case of that or none.

The learned Appayya Dikshit is known to have subjected Sri Madhwa's philosophy to some critical examination but it is not within the reach of the present writer and after all it is not likely to help historic aims very much for the Dikshit lived long after the Teacher himself and his object was to criticise the philosophy not to write of the philosopher and his methods were anything but historic.

Sasans and inscriptions have yet to come to light with perhaps the sole exception of one single epigraphic contribution of an inscription at Sri Kurmam relating to Swami Narahari Thirtha from which one is able to limit the field of

* Mr. Subba Rao of Salem has published translations of *S tra Bhashya* and the commentaries of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The latter has a sketch of the guru's life but necessarily of the orthodox kind.

conjecture relating to the time of Sri Madhwa's existence and labours in our midst. Some day we may expect the *mutts* to discover documents of high historic value but the day is not yet.

In these circumstances the reader hardly needs to be cautioned against the imperfections attending an attempt of this kind and the provisional nature of most of the 'conclusions' arrived at. He only needs reminding that in presenting what facts and conclusions have become available to the writer, *he has been studiously keeping the historic view of them throughout and has not deliberately chosen to go out of it*

CHAPTER II

1—THE LAND OF THE GURU'S BIRTH

The land of the Guru's birth combines all the rare physical beauties of Western Coast Districts and its people have long been remarkable for their fine build and high intelligence. In our own day the Mangaloreans have distinguished themselves in many walks of life and their women form the best educated on our side.

It was about the middle of the eighth century after Christ that this land of *Tuluva* now comprising the Canaras more or less is believed to have received a fresh wave of Brahmin immigrants with whom this narrative is immediately concerned. They are known to have been invited by the Vanavasi Kadamba King Mayura Varman. They were followers of Kumarila Bhatta in the main that is upholders of the *Karika Marga* as established by the *Purva Mimamsa* School of Jaimini. Bhatta it need hardly be stated is now familiar to the schoolboy as the most successful and relentless of the persecutors of Buddhism in Northern India though the day may come when through the kind offices of research he will cease to occupy that high eminence in which his friends and his enemies have both conspired to raise him.

These Bhatta immigrants however soon embraced in the next generation the system of Sri Sankara who had established a *mutt* at Sringeri on the Tungabhadra from which energetic apostolic successors were spreading his faith in all directions.

For upwards of five hundred years *Advaitism* and the practices associated therewith had been spreading and driving their roots apparently without

violence or tumult in every province of India, till at length the faith could claim more than ninety per cent of the people of India. Even now as has been noted already according to a recent calculation it includes about seventy five per cent of the Hindua at the time of which we are writing therefore it must have included more for there have since been schisms from it in the shape of Vaishnava and other sects, which have drawn away large numbers of people from its ranks.

2—THE STATE OF SANKARA'S SYSTEM

But Sankara's system like every other system that the world has seen had undoubtedly had weak points about it which though hid from men a gaze in its morning splendor had silently grown with its growth and had begun to discover many ugly features the worst of which bore indirectly or otherwise on character. Pandit Narayana notes some of them though he is more vehement on the doctrinal side of the evil—perhaps because he regarded them as Paul III hid parents of the other. The doctors of the dominant theology had grown inert, we are told and were proclaiming from the house tops that phenomena were unreal that the Lord is an Person and has no (righteous) attributes that souls were undifferentiated and so forth. Several pious people had begun to feel dissatisfied with the prevalent philosophy and its influence on character. The shades of False Theology had obscured the Sun of Truth and a vague and new tune was haunting the ears of some thousands of the Canara people and of the adjoining districts. This tune it was given in Sri Madhwa in act in music.

We learn incidentally that Sankara's was only one of the twenty one chief heretical systems

then in existence. The names of these are given by more than one Madhwa writer, but in no recognised order—neither logical nor chronological. But twenty not of twenty one, apparently exceeded but little trouble to brush them aside so that the one system which Madhwa had to oppose with all his might was Sankara's in doing which accordingly he has employed special methods and special care as will be detailed later on and has set himself to condemn not only his philosophy in incidental and formal ways but his personality as well, after the manner familiar enough to the student of religious history—after the manner, for instance of the Catholics in the case of Luther.

One of these special methods was a new doctrine which was formed by the guru and definitely mentioned in his *Bharata Thathparya Nirnaya* and reproduced with additions and embellishments by Padit Narayana in his *Madhwa Vyaya* and in a special manner in *Manimāyari*. Stated in the beaten way then the crasse of the avatar of Madhwa was this—

The *Djitas*, being eternal enemies of Vishnu had received repeated beatings at the hands of the Lord whenever they presumed to trouble His people—as for instance in connection with His avatars of Narasimba Rama and Krishna Vayu the son of Vishnu had on every one of these occasions appeared in the flesh along with his Father—as Hanuman helping Rama and as Bhima carrying out the wishes of Krishna and so forth. On this latter occasion he had slain a *djita*, Maniman by name (a story which may be read in the *Aranya Parva*) who having thus been baffled in physical fighting had for long been plotting to create a secession among the people of Vishnu. At length having been armed with the necessary weapons by Siva whom he had pleased

with his penances and prayers he entered the world as Sankara and had by reason of his rare dialectical skill succeeded in spreading his false faith. The chosen of Vishnu had too long been kept steeped in ignorance and at the request of the Devas and Brahma Vishnu was pleased to desire His son and servant Vayu to go down once more and gather the good and the pious in the fold and condemn the wicked. The resolution having once been made in heaven it was made known to the people (of South Canara) in various well known ways. On one occasion for instance at a festive gathering at the temple of Udipi, the spirit of Ananteswar was upon a Brahmin and made him *messenger of good news* and proclaim the kingdom of heaven at hand. And it was also found later on and after the *guru* had made his mark fairly well that the Rig Veda itself had foretold the advent of the great reformer and his triumphs!

There is nothing absolutely original under the sun—no not even in the white heat of religious rancour. The stories bear such a monotonous feature about them. For the reader has but to change the names and he will find the story fitting a hundred other contexts equally well.

The real situation however was that Sankara's system had shown itself more intellectual than moral as has been already said and over the whole of India the wave of Bhakti Marga was passing for some centuries—due perhaps among other things to Islamic activities of those days.

3—BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS OF THE GURU

In those days there lived in Pajaka in the village of Belle six miles to the south east of Udipi a Brahmin of the name of Madhya Geba* owning some small plot of garden land living on what

* Literally *middle house*—an evident rendering into Sanskrit of the vernacular clan name or distinct *re* family name.

could he got from cultivating it. He was well-versed in the Vedas and the Vedangas and was honourably ennamed the Bhatta. He had married a beautiful and virtuous wife Vedavati by name by whom he had had in the course of several years two sons and a daughter, of whom the sons had died in infancy while the daughter was still living. The Brahmin however being strictly orthodox in his views had been longing for a son to continue the thread of his line and he and his wife had been moving with prayers and penances the Lord of Udipi who was their tutelary deity. At length after a trial of over twelve years the Lord was pleased to hear their prayers and bless them and in the year 4800 of Kali Yuga which roughly corresponds to 1199 of the Christian era on the last day of Dasara the wife of Madhva Gehr presented him with a son. And this son became Sri Madhva the Founder of the Dvaita System of philosophy.

The year of his birth is indicated by the guru himself in his *Dharata Thatparja Nirnaya* and has nearly been established by a recent epigraphic find at Sri Kurman of which mention has already been made. Mr H Krishna Sastri the finder argues the question of the exact year in a thoroughly scientific way and reaches the conclusion that the year of the guru's birth must have been 1238 A.D. The present writer however is not prepared to regard it as conclusive and until the chain of his argument is made more complete is not willing to summarily reject the *sloka* referred to as an interpolation which is what the Sastri does. For the present then the year of the guru's birth is 1199. But though the year is thus a matter of doubt the month and day are quite accurately known for *Madhva Navami* is the first red letter day of the Madhwa Calendar. Mr C.M.P. Acharya discusses the question at some length and believes

✓ 1238 A.D. to be the year in which the guru was born or became a *Sanyasin*! But in this discussion *Vidyasanakar* is left out of account which is not desirable for next after the Guru himself he is the chief actor in this play as will be shown below

The event naturally caused the greatest rejoicing in the family. More than that it caused rejoicing in Heaven and the Devas proclaimed success to the righteous and confusion to the wicked. The spirit of Vayu was also seen to descend from Heaven and enter the child's body!

The father blessed the name of the Lord and called the child Vasudeva and the child grew up and was the joy of his parents and friends. Orientals are as a rule precocious and Vasudeva gave indications from childhood onwards of a glorious future. Miracles necessarily formed part of them of which a sample or two must suffice for our present purpose. The parents had taken the child to be presented to the Lord of Udupi and as they were returning through a dense and fearful forest an evil spirit dwelling thereabout opposed their way but presently felt rebuked by the divine Child and went about his business bearing testimony to the godly presence of Vayu. On another occasion in his fifth year the child was one day found missing and after an anxious search made everywhere for three whole days his parents saw him again at the temple of Ananteswar at Udupi teaching gods and men how to worship Vishnu according to the Shastras.

In due course Vasudeva was initiated into the mysteries of the alphabet and invested with the sacred string and sent to the village school to learn the chanting of the Vedas along with other boys of his age. Among these he soon distinguished

himself very highly in various forms of physical exercise and field games. He could wrestle, run, jump and swim most wonderfully—so much so that people loved to call him Bhima for his strength and agility. Perhaps it was this fact which need not be doubted that was after all the chief foundation of the doctrine already referred to and what was at first mere rhetoric was afterwards changed either silently or deliberately into logic and sanctified later into an undoubted article of faith. Hundreds of other examples may be cited to prove that the grandest of doctrines often rest upon very simple foundations. The reader will easily call to mind the celebrated Christian doctrine of transubstantiation and in our own land it is in some quarters believed that the celebrity of *Dasaguna* ten beaded (*Ratana*) rests upon nothing more than a bit of rhetoric indicative of that chieftain's bull neck!

In his studies properly so called however Vasudeva is said to have failed to give his teacher satisfaction or promise of any kind, being habitually irregular in attendance and inattentive to lessons. This statement does not agree with what has been already said about the boy's precocity but we must suppose this to be an attempt to may perhaps not well meant to show the divine side of the Gurn and magnify it in the eyes of the disciples. The village schoolmaster therefore apparently gave him up in despair and Vasudeva left school soon after though it is not easy to say when.

The next event in his life was his renunciation which as we shall presently see occurred about his twenty-fifth year and on this occasion we find him styled *Purna Pragia* in recognition of his uncommon learning in the Vedas and Vedangas. It is hard to reconcile both these statements without some connecting link. We

have therefore to assume that humanly speaking Vasudeva left the village school after the usual vedic course was completed and for several years afterwards had been learning the *Śāstras* i.e. logic grammar dialectics and the like to what excellent purpose the world has since known so well

4—THE GREAT RENUNCIATION

But all these several years there were forces working within which are now hid from us but which were slowly drifting Vasudeva towards renunciation. The Pandit himself does not help us here for he merely talks of the gods hastening him on and other vague things which in effect amounts to saying he does not know. Whatever the reason however when Vasudeva at length made up his mind to renounce he proved himself terribly in earnest about it sought for a *guru* to formally initiate him and soon found him in a certain Achuthapreksha if that is a reliable proper name. This monk we are told had become dissatisfied with the Vedānta he had been taught and was awaiting the advent of some man of God to reform it. How far this could have been true we shall find later on when his own pupil was trying to wean him from the old faith.

The act of renunciation was not easy for the boy was the darling of his parents and what more their only son. It therefore meant that the old parents were once again to go without funeral rites—the worst lot that could befall them in the circumstances. They begged they chided and remonstrated. But Vasudeva prophesied a younger brother for himself and having remained a secular novice till it was realised in due course and his brother (Vishnubirtha as he came to be known long after) was born he got at length initiated according to the *Śāstras*

and was acclaimed by the assembled people with the title of Purna Pragon. Immediately after the ceremony was over, as the young monk was 'adoring Ananteswar' the spirit of the Lord was in one of the crowd who turning to Achotapreksha cried out, 'My son, behold my beloved for whom thou hast been longing all the while' He is thy guide and the means of thy salvation!'

The act of renunciation is usually placed in Vasudera's ninth year by the orthodox—for very obvious reasons. But two or three good reasons may be adduced to prove this was much later, though thereby it is not meant to lessen the guru's greatness any way. It may be said once for all that the greatness of Sri Madhwa, like the greatness of other persons of his class, does not depend on these frail crutches but rests on the solid foundation of the work he has done.

Now, in the first place the Pandit mentions the occurrence of a festival immediately after this renunciation, which looks most like the *Mahamaham* celebrated once every twelve years at Kumbakonam. The period of twelve years is calculated on the motions of the planet Jupiter and its latest celebration was in 1897. Tradition among Madhwas connects the institution of this festival at Kumbakonam with the name of Madhwa, and there is nothing to point against it. If then he had established a festival of this kind, he must have modelled it on what was obtaining at Udipi in that connection. This conclusion may be asserted without fear of contradiction if the festival had been kept up still at Udipi, but unfortunately it is not—worse than that no one remembers its ever having been done there in the past, so that all tracing it to its right source has now become impossible. It is some small consolation that there is still a

festival of the kind observed at a shrine in South Canara called *Vyasthala*

If, therefore, we agree to take this occurrence for a fact, and calculate backwards, it reduces the *guru's* age at the time of the renunciation to either thirteen or twenty five. The writer prefers taking the latter, for, as has been already said Vasudeva had by the time he renounced, not only mastered his training in the Vedas and Vedangas but had also been waiting for some years to please his parents who described themselves as old and past all hopes of child bearing. There is therefore, every likelihood of its proving the right time,* if we agree that Vasudeva renounced in his twenty fifth year and became a monk to be known from that time by the name of *Purna Pragna*.

The dedication of his life hereby to the study and realisation of Vedanta soon brought his vigorous dialectical and logical powers to the front and the old Sankhite Vedantism of Achutapreksha failed to satisfy him. He saw weak points in it at every step and, unconsciously perhaps at first but slowly and sorely he was drifting towards opposition. While it was yet in its earlier stages he had had on several occasions to argue with his own guru who had been nourished in the old faith and often to carry discussion to unpleasant lengths. But the fame of his discourses soon spread and the young monks' strong convictions and great originality began to be noised abroad in the neighbourhood and his presence felt in many different ways.

Some time after his learning had made him a worthy recipient thereof Achutapreksha was glad to promote him to the first rank of monk hood and instal him as the Pundit says *Ruler of the Kingdom of Vedanta*, which in all likelihood

means, make him Head of the *mutt* he was ruling till then. On this occasion he received the name of *Ananda Thirtha*, the name by which he styles himself in all his writings. This position gave him the first place among the monks at the *mutt* attached to Ananteswar, and for some years they all lived exercising themselves in prayers and penances, study, disputation and the other duties enjoined on the order.

CHAPTER III.

I —THE GURUS SOUTHERN TOUR

The Deccan in those days was, as we know, split up into a number of kingdoms of varying sizes and importance, mostly independent, too often hostile and intriguing. Several names of such kingdoms and rulers have been unearthed and gathered together by the labours of Archaeologists. But whatever their other defects, the chiefs were, as a rule, all professing patronage to learning such as it then was. Occasionally there were specialists gracing particular courts such, for instances, as *Vignaneswara*. But the bulk of the Pandits were as a rule 'generalists' and were able to discourse, boldly, if not always profitably, on 'the sciences' in general, and the Vedanta in particular. And in an age of incessant war troubles and insecurity the most pleasing feature of the Indian land undoubtedly was that it was easy and possible for men of learning to travel from court to court with the express purpose of heating opponents at the dialectical tournaments and melas with which kings and chiefs loved to amuse themselves, and of winning sonorous titles and tangible rewards. The reader may, if he likes feast his ears with a few specimen titles like '*Tharka panchanana*,' '*Vadi Simha*,' '*Pratnadi Bhayanlara*' and the like still surviving in odd corners. The discourses were usually dry as dust and academic except when on occasions it was a case of Buddhist or Jain persecution, when a ghastly interest attached to it where men were driven to argue with the unuse of Zaleukos thrown about their necks, and an angry and clamorous multitude were eager to decide questions on other grounds than their merits. Readers of the lives of saints

in all lands will easily recollect cases where miracles of a sort are too often decided for or against a party Madhwa as we may hereafter agree to call Ananda Thirtha though for reasons not well known had during these quiet years, come across many such peripatetic knights of learning and had learned to recognise his superiority and to habitually oppose the essentials of the old faith

At length sure of holding his own in controversies Madhwa set out for a tour through the southern districts of South India We learn that just before doing it he managed to make his peace with his father This evidently means that the wrath which had inflamed poor Madhya Geba on the occasion of his son's proposed renunciation because all his entreaties had failed to shake Madhwa's resolve had not cooled down until several years after and not until the rising fame of the young monk had justified his choice and he was tempted to exclaim as the father of another seemingly unpromising son did in profane history 'after all the booby has some sense'

Accompanied by Achntapreksha and others Madhwa went south and stopped at Vishnu mangalam This town which lies twenty seven miles South of Mangalore we shall meet in this sketch once more in a later context Here occurred one of those miracles which delight his devout followers most and which connect him with Bhima in one of his tremendous aspects The reader will remember the highly delightful story of the Pandu hero's encounter with the Asura Baka and his eating with ease the monster dinner which had been prepared for him and which had been entrusted into his hands to be taken to the monster What we have in *Madhwa Vyasa* is but a tame version of this story and Madhwa is said to have satisfied his hosts by this exhibition of

his Bhima nature. A dozen times or so he eats fairly 'monstrous' dinners but the more miraculous part of the story is where we find him doing the very opposite of it namely, 'multiplying loaves' to meet the needs of his party in the midst of wildernesses. The reader will again think of the story of Krishna eating the only grain of rice which Draupadi could find for him on a rather serious occasion in the period of the exile of the Pandus of which this is perhaps a distorted and tame version.

2—THE INCIDENT AT TRIVANDRUM

The next important halt was made at Trivandrum and here it was in all likelihood that an event occurred which has served since as a turning point in the history of Madhwaism. We saw that Madhwa was till now only engaged in controverting individual articles of the monistic faith and baffling the average champions of that faith whom he happened to meet by his pitiless logic and cross questioning. From this desirable attitude of healthy enquiry and research Madhwa felt bound to turn after what occurred here and discover now and ever afterwards an attitude of uncompromising hostility and loathing towards *the person of Sankara* his system and his followers. What in reality it was that occurred we cannot tell for we have only the evidence of a partisan who was not himself an eye witness to it and who is evidently desirous to show his own side to the best advantage. But even he finds it hard to dismiss it in the easy and beaten way in which other controversies are brushed aside and reading between the lines therefore we are not perhaps wrong in concluding that there was a disputation held here before the King according to the custom obtaining in such cases that it was between Madhwa and the then incumbent of the Sringeri mutt who had chanced to be there.

touring on his own account, that Madhwa was not able to silence his opponent as speedily or effectively here, as he is said to have done elsewhere, and that the disputants parted in anger and ill will and smarting under the injury thus caused to his reputation Madhwa bore ever afterwards deadly enmity to the triumphant rival and treated him and his triumph in the way familiar to us in religious controversies pretty much, that is, as the early Christians treated the Romans and the Pagans generally, when they became the objects of relentless persecution at their hands or as the Protestants looked upon Philip and his agents

The Pandit calls this monk of Sringeri *San'ara* (with a slight modification of the first letter, made in the worst of tastes) and, though that great *guru* had lived and laboured six or seven centuries earlier, coolly asks us to believe he had come down again to secure a dialectical victory over Madhwa. At the same time he gives us a rare glimpse of this person for he calls him 'the dwarf'. We are naturally curious to learn more about this dwarfish monk who was in the main instrumental in making Madhwa's attitude towards the faith and person of Sankara into one of eternal hostility. But unluckily neither *Madhwa Vyāsa* nor *Manimāyasa* throws further light on him.

There is however a list of Sankara's successors furnished by the Sringeri Mutt though it is manifestly incomplete and imperfect. We have nevertheless the rare luck to find in it the name of *Vidya Sankar*, who is said to have occupied the seat between 1228 A D and 1333 A D. The latter date is worthless for it would give Vidya Sankar a pontificate of a hundred and five years! We therefore reject it. But the year 1228 is very important for among other things it settles

the time of Madhwa's southern tour if not his age at the time of renunciation. Vidya Sankar having been installed in 1228 the tour of Madhwa must only have occurred sometime after that event when probably that monk was also making his first tour about his 'diocese' which to this day includes Trivandrum.

The rise of bad blood here under circumstances mentioned and the accidental coincidence of the names of his adversary and of the Founder of Advaitism therefor showed itself in the formation of the Bhama Maoiman theory shaped and fortified during the guru's own life time and embellished and added to by the zeal of his successors. This conclusion becomes all the more probable when it is remembered that in addition to this occurrence at Trivandrum Madhwa and his followers were for many years afterwards being persecuted and annoyed in various ways by the followers of the dominant faith a few of which will be found in their proper contexts later on.

The addition of *Vidya* to the name of Sankar gives point to this argument for it indicates the *Swami's* great learning in Advaitism and accounts for the tough fighting and the unpleasant ending of the controversy at Trivandrum. So that it may now be taken as good as proved that the parties to this dispute were in very truth Vidya Sankar and Madhwa and that the result of the dispute was a turning point in the genesis of Madhwaism.

The ill will originating at Trivandrum was further intensified by a second collision at Pame swar where for four months or more the wicked dogs kept howling at his gates while the lion within very properly refused to be drawn out or disturbed by them.

Then the guru travelled to Srirangam and along the banks of the Palar bank to Udipi.

3 —THE NET RESULT OF THE TOUR

The account we have of some of the controversies of Madhwa in this tour tallies wonderfully with what we learn from other sources regarding the general characteristics of disputations in those days. There are mere 'academics' and touch on abstruse philosophic questions, on which the last word could never be said. One sample will suffice. The Pandits 'somewhere on the bank of the Palar,' probably Conjeeveram, desired to try Madhwa's powers of exposition and taking advantage of a casual remark of his that it was possible to interpret the *Srutis* in three ways, the *Mahabharata* in ten ways and each of the *Thousand Names of Vishnu* in a hundred different ways, they challenged him to interpret the first of the Names *Vista*, in a hundred ways, tempting him and meaning to trap him. But he knew their hearts and took up the challenge with alacrity and with the help of rules relating to the use of prefixes and suffixes, began to expound the meanings connoted by the term *Vista* in such a terrific manner that before he had done with half a dozen, the Pandits felt dazed and stunned and earnestly besought him to desist, owning his divinity without question as well as their own littleness!

The net result of the tour was Madhwa's perception of his own greatness and the widening of the breach between him and the head priest of the Sringeri *mutt*. Accordingly soon after his return, he wrote his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita which set forth incidentally the essentials of his faith and formed the prelude to the composition of the guru's commentaries of the Vedanta Sutras, and the formal proclamation of his faith later on.

matters to deal with people in sensible ways, and understand the secret that 'the nearest road to a man's heart lies through the tongue.' So whatever use he might make of the term '*Mlechha*' for dialectical purposes he had had no scruple to deal with them to effect his purposes. The present day Gurus on the other hand the *Sramas* that is those that occupy *Mutt*s everywhere in India are much diviner beings than their founders for so far from learning *Mlechha* languages or indeed learning anything at all that may do them or others good they shut themselves up as a rule and when they find they must stir out do it with all manner of absurd precautions and if as ill luck would have it they chance to meet the gaze of a *Mlechha* walking the road they must needs fast the whole day and make gifts of milch cows to purify themselves!

At Goa it appears the Guru had actually to save himself and party by flight.

Of all the troubles which attended the tour however one of the most annoying seems to have been irregularities of his own immediate disciples—those who were doing him personal service and were therefore most intimate with him. They were apparently a wild sect of Canara Brahmins with thick heads and stalwart limbs. The other miracles which they had witnessed having apparently failed to touch their hearts the Guru had to prove his *Bhima* nature to them by actual wrestling with them jointly and severally and flooring them all with ease!

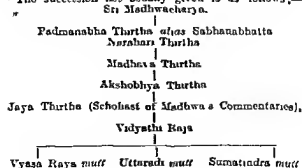
3 THE GURU AT HARDWAR THE SUTRA BHASHYA

In this manner Madhwa reached Hardwar where he stayed and passed a number of days in fasting silence and contemplation and then left all alone for the abode of Vyasa—the

Himalaya Nadari or some wilderness adjoining Here he remained some time, nobody knowing anything of his movements. The Pundit, of course, talks of the Guru's unwillingness to go back to the mortal world, for it had all become rotten at that time and of his hesitation 'to throw sacrificial rice before dogs' as well as Vyasa's encouragement asking him to go because there were still people left in the world who deserved and desired salvation. This in all probability means that the Guru began *proclaiming* his faith only after much hesitation and prolonged mental struggle.

Having made up his mind, however, he returned to Hardwar and began fearlessly proclaiming the supreme Godhead of Vishnu and published his most enduring work, the Commentaries of the Vedanta Sūtras and preaching his faith wherever he went, he returned slowly, stopping at Kalyan, the metropolis of the Chalukya Empire and the natural resort of Pundits in those days. Here he made his first great conversion that, namely, of an eminent rival *Sobhanabhatta* by name, who, as has been noted succeeded the Guru after his departure and became head of the *mutt*, whose branches* at the present day claim the allegiance of the bulk of the Madhwas.

* The succession list usually given is as follows,—



4 BACK TO UDIPI—MINOR REFORMS

On his return to Udipi Madhwa's first business was to convert his own Gorn Achutapreksha. Though we were told on a former occasion that he was one of those who had become dissatisfied with the faith in which he had been brought up the account of his conversion given here seems to point to a different state of things altogether. For Madhwa had to repent his arguments refuting the faith of Sankara over and over to him and when that course failed to convince Achutha preksha he had to add *the terror of his voice* and anathemas in case of further persistence before the Guru's mind could be purged of all heresy!

As conversions multiplied and new questions presented themselves for solution the Gorn made a number of changes though perhaps not all of them reforms. The branding on the shoulders with the arms of Vishnu already adapted by Ramanoja was declared necessary according to Shastras though the way in which it is now done—under which the Madhwa men and women are branded every time that the head of their *mutt* makes his visitation—is perhaps a novelty introduced after Madhwa's time. The founding of the temple at Udipi in honour of Krishna was meant to unify and concentrate the interests of his followers and in this day most of the orthodox Madhwas manage to go to Udipi once at least in their lives. The prohibition of bloodshed in connection with sacrifices (of which more hereafter) was however reform of no small consequence for which the societies for the prevention of cruelty and torture to animals and those that feel with it might truly feel grateful to the Gorn.

CHAPTER V

I BEGINNINGS OF PERSECUTION

But these changes and conversions naturally earned for the teacher a rich crop of enemies among the followers of the dominant faith and its high priests at Sringeri. The Sringeri *mutt* having long enjoyed great political influence in addition to its superiority in point of numbers on its side we can easily imagine its attitude towards a rival so near its headquarters (Udipi is not very far from Sringeri) proclaiming himself a prophet and denouncing the accepted doctrines. Ceaseless insults and injuries were bound to be the order of the day especially as the new sect besides being inferior in numbers had as yet had no royal support under which to thrive peaceably or forcibly. Maltreatment with impunity must necessarily have made the anxious eyes of the followers torn towards the Guru for remedy and as the prospect of immediate redress of wrongs could not under the circumstances be held out the Guru must have formulated the famous Bhima Maniman Theory under which the dominant sect and its founder became as has been already related the eternal enemies of the people of God seeming to prosper for a time but bound ultimately to be beaten by the Lord's servant.

This is the only rational conclusion which one had to draw from the narrative we have concerning the composition of a work which Madhwa was busy with at this time. It was the *Mahabharata Tīathparyā Nirṇaya* i.e. Exposition of the right meaning of the Mahabharata.

This revision of the great epic of Vyasa was rendered necessary we are told inasmuch as the sage's meaning had become misunderstood and

foreign matter had got mixed with the original. Madhva is stated to have gone to the abode of Vyasa to obtain his special sanction for rewriting his work and fortified with it to have written the Mahabharata aright i.e. so as to strengthen his system and confirm and sanctify the Bhima Maniman incident as yet without a local habitation. The general reader notes that Vyasa's special sanction was needed only in two cases—the Commentaries and this Revision. The former needed it as a matter of course for it was the basis of the system. Why the latter should need it while some other works of the Guru more important from a doctrinal point of view do not seem to have felt the need for it is a question naturally suggesting it to the curious mind and demanding an answer. It may not perhaps be altogether wrong for us to suppose that the doctrine in question which was for the first time formulated was the chief cause of the special sanction felt needed in this case.

2. THE APPROPRIATION OF THE LIBRARY

We now come to the greatest injury the Guru sustained at the hands of the rival priests during his lifetime. More than a chapter and a half out of the sixteen chapters of *Madhva Vijaya* is devoted to the narration of this incident thereby showing its great importance. It was the forcible appropriation of the Guru's library by the head of the Sringeri mutt. It happened in this way.

After the encounter at Trivandrum Vidya Sankar of Sringeri did not apparently trouble farther about Madhva for the simple reason that the latter had not become formidable until several years after. The date of Vidya Sankar's exit given in the published list is 1833 which we already saw means some irregularity in the Register for it allots to this Swami more than

a hundred years of pontificate. One or two names have clearly escaped the attention of the Sringeri mutt, and this is made clearer from what we have in *Madhwa Vyasa*. From the latter we learn that the monk who was ruling at Sringeri at this time was a *Padma Thirtha* who is said to have succeeded *Gnan Sreshtha* i.e. *Vidya Sankar*. This *Padma Thirtha* therefore is the missing link or one of the missing links between *Vidya Sankar* and *Bharati Krishna* who according to the list succeeded the former in 1833. *Vidya Sankar* made his exit in peace and was succeeded by *Padma Thirtha* a monk from the country of the Cholas i.e. from the Coromandel Coast. A strong suspicion however attaches to this part of the story and to the name given by reason of the startling coincidence of the name *Padma Thirtha* with *Padmapada* the chief disciple of the great *Senkara* who was also a man from the Chola land.

Padma Thirtha or whoever else he was saw the danger threatening the faith. The fame of *Madhwa* consequent on the publication of the Commentaries and the conversion of *Sobhana Bhatta* had begun to tell. The converts armed with the zeal natural to them were seen in many places actively engaged in fishing for men. It was time therefore that something were done to check the spread of the new faith. A *Pandemonium* was held at Sringeri and a plan of operation was agreed on. *Smartha* missionaries were to go in all directions and counteract the mischief. They were not to be very scrupulous as to the means employed in silencing heretical teaching. If calumny and other legitimate means should fail there was His Holiness prepared to end his rival by the use of the Black Art which he had not learned for nothing. And if even this should miscarry they might rest assured that poison would not. The Gurn therefore was bound to be caught somehow and despatched

Before resorting to these extreme measures, however Padma Thirtha sought to try the effect of taking the Guru's library away from him. We can easily understand the value of the palm leaf manuscripts in the days previous to printing and the introduction of cheap and easy writing materials. Padma Thirtha evidently believed that if the works of the rival teacher were appropriated the system would receive a severe blow, from which it might not easily recover. Orders to seize hold of the manuscripts from Madhwa missionaries had already been issued to those who had been sent to counteract their work. The chief priest therefore merely sought to crown the work of spoliation by laying hold of the central library and carrying the manuscripts away and burying them somewhere from which they should never more see the light. The plan once decided on was successfully carried out on the borders of the territory of King *Jaya Simha*.

This king or chief must have been connected with the *Jaya Simhas* of the *Chalukya* dynasty but of his religious bias it is not easy to say anything. He was a ruler of *Kumbha* called after an old town eight miles north of *Kesaragod*. But his capital was at *Vishnumangalam* which we have already known. The name of the capital is significant enough but it does not enable us to say anything more than that the king was well disposed towards the new teacher. To him Madhwa applied for help and the library was through his intercession recovered in due course. The Guru stayed at his court for some time but the prince does not seem to have been converted for during the rest of the teacher's life he does not appear to have had any royal convert. The usual additions of the present day heads of *mutts* elephants horses palanquins and the like which are gifts of kings and rich men being apparently conspicuous by their absence to the last day of Madhwa.

3 LAST YEARS OF THE GURU

It was just after the restoration of the library that the last great conversion of the Guru was made—that namely of Pundit Trivikrama. His son Pundit Narayan from whom we have received the only original account available of the life and doings of the guru gives us a full description of the circumstances under which his father became a convert. It is just what we have already seen in regard to Achutapreksha namely that Trivikrama had been brought up in the old faith but had become dissatisfied with it though he did not choose to become the follower of the new Guru until after eight days of hot discussion he had felt himself vanquished.

The fame of Trivikrama's conversion brought 10 other adherents. The descendants of this Pundit are said to be still seen in South Canara or in the Cochin State territory showing to the pious pilgrim the image of Krishna presented by Madhwa to his great disciple after his conversion. Social needs however seem to have subsequently forced them to go back for they are now said to profess the old faith or call themselves at all events Smarthas.

If our surmise regarding the date of the Guru's tour to the North is correct that is if he had undertaken it after 1260 he must now have been perverting his faith for about fifteen years. It was at this time that while the guru was still somewhere in King Java's territories that his parents died at Udupi within a few months of each other. Madhwa's brother attended to their funeral rites but presently after felt miserable because he had become ruined in business. Vexed with the world and now that his duty to his parents had been done he went to his brother and persuaded him to let him have

the monk a robe which being granted he remained attached to his brother under the name of *Vishnu Thirtha* till the day of his departure

Madhwa seems to have spent his last years mostly in *Sarilantara* the doab formed by the *Kumara Dhara* and *Aetrarati* writing monographs on doctrinal or practical points and sending missionaries to silence opponents. And here on one occasion he went to bathe in the sea in connection with an eclipse of the sun. The sea behaved very rudely to him but casting an angry look on it he stilled it!

The records of the Madhwa mutts assign to the founder seventy nine years six months and twenty days of *active rule*. This is clearly impossible for it makes him live even after Alauddin's invasion of the Dakhan in 1291. From what we have said regarding Madhwa Vyasa it is clear that even when Pandit Narayana lived he had only heard of the Mahomedan terror to Hindostan. We have therefore to suppose that the period indicated is the period of Madhwa's life. The last miracles recorded of him are those connected with his activities in *Sarilantara* as the names of places go to show. No tradition tells us as to what exactly became of him in the end except that he disappeared one day even as he sat teaching but his followers now believe that he rejoined Vyasa after having desired Padmanabha Thirtha to carry on the apostolic work and put the guardianship of the shrine of Krishna at Udipi under the care of a Board of eight others of his disciples. In the shade of Vyasa Madhwa is still believed to remain against the beginning of a new Kalpa when he will be rewarded with the office of Brahma (the Creator)

CHAPTER VI

OUTLINE OF THE GURU'S FAITH

The limits of the sketch do not allow our following the fortunes of the faith under Madhwa's successors. Like many another faith the one *mutt* which he had left behind for propagandism has become split up into three chief branches with but little useful links among them. In succeeding centuries rich and royal disciples endowed each of the *mutts* liberally as they happened to belong to the one or the other. And certain well known factors internal and external have brought about in them as in every other *mutt* that one could name a state of things most deplorable in the interests of society and religion and loudly calling for remedy and state intervention.

But the sketch will scarcely answer its purpose if it fails to take a bird's eye view of the chief features of the faith and of the chief points of difference between it and the faith standing most opposed to it i.e. Sankara's.

The faith is Vaishnavism or *Sai Vaishnavism* as the Madhwas love to call it so as to distinguish it from the *Sri Vaishnavism* of Ramanuja. It might be viewed like most of the Indian faiths of any importance in its philosophical as well as practical aspects. Being founded as all post-Buddhist faiths are on logic and grammar the Dvaita Philosophy starts with a fivefold hypothesis. A belief in the *Panchabheda* five prime real and eternal distinctions is what one has to begin with. That is to say he has to take for granted the distinction between the Supreme Spirit and lesser spirits between spirit and matter and so forth even as the student of the Advaita Philosophy has to take the existence of *Maya* or *Avidya* for

granted The Dwaita hypothesis therefore repudiates in unmistakable terms the Monism of Sankara and the modified Dualism of Ramanuja Phenomenal world it follows is *real and eternal* and true perception is only gained when to use a favourite Vedantic simile silver is seen to be silver and not when mother of pearl is mistaken for it in which case we see but do not *perceive* The hypothesis like so many others of its kind may some day clash with proved scientific facts and conclusions but human ingenuity is infinite and inconsistencies will no doubt be explained away if people are earnest about saving the system

The Supreme Spirit is Vishnu or Narayana and is the Personal First Cause the Moral and Intelligent Governor of the Universe He and his Consort Lakshmi are real though mysterious persons Brahma (the Creator) and Vayu are two of his sons It is Vishnu that is talked of as Brahma in the Upanishads and His attributes are endless

Souls or spirits have forms corresponding to those of animated nature in this universe and are of three classes Those of the first class are alone destined for eternal residence in the abode of Narayana which they enter sooner or later according to the fruit of their *karma* here below The lesser gods the Pitrs (roughly corresponding to the names of the Romans) sages kings and a few other select classes of persons come under this head The third class consists of those spirits that are doomed to eternal hell towards which their sins drift them helplessly on The enemies of Vishnu and of His people and those that doubt the revealed nature of the Vedas and sin against God and man are among members of this group The spirits of the middle class are destined to attain neither but like Sisypheus are ever doing

and never done,' being eternally subject to the ups and downs of *Samsara*, i.e. evils of birth and death

2 TENETS SPECIALLY CHARACTERISTIC OF THE FAITH

Few among the Indian faiths have cared to be so rigorously logical. The thirst for eternal peace of the troubled human soul has indeed from very early times been solved in India by a belief in a debtor creditor system of Karma. The exposition of this system had in previous times been based on an assumption that it is possible for *all* souls to attain eternal bliss sooner or later when the debtor side of each soul's account should show zero. Madhwa now completed the symmetry of it by another equally rational and possible though cruel and inhuman assumption that the creditor side might show zero—the more easily because there were candidates enough for eternal hell at that time in the persecutors of the new faith. This position has recently been sought to be defended on the ground of some inexorable 'Law of Nature' which takes no account of men's nerves. But it comes with the worst grace from those who extol *Bhakti Marga* so much.

Once more doctrinal point deserves to be noticed because so far as the writer is aware no other Indian faith shows its like at all events in the form in which it is presented that namely which declares that there is no salvation possible for man except through *Vayu* the son of *Vishnu*. The genesis of this doctrine is hard to come at. From the earliest known times the Gurm or the spiritual guide has always claimed and been allowed exceptional sanctity because the idea of each one guiding his own spiritual progress without any help from a learned preceptor was never started here and the assertion of Milton that every man has an equal right to interpret the Revealed

Book according to the light that is in him was never once so much as dreamt of in India. Guru Nanak, Founder of the Sikh faith, seems to have been the chief of the latter day Reformers who laid much greater stress than had been done of old on the sanctity and necessity of the spiritual guide. But no one except Madhwa seems to have given it this remarkable shape or presented it in this highly suggestive form. What its genesis might be due to we cannot undertake to say at present. We might therefore just note it and pass on.

In the rules on individual and social life so far as religion influences them the sect like many another of those or succeeding times has consciously or otherwise drifted towards the Puranas though sure enough professing the highest regard for the *Śruti* and *Smṛiti*. The fact is that during the long course of our medieval history we neglected the higher and eternal teachings of the *Śruti* and swore foolishly by the lower and temporary ritualistic and caste ideals of the *Smṛiti* and *Puranas* and this fully accounts for our downfall. If this is a fact then Madhwaism shares it as fully as any other sect. The Guru himself in the *Thāthparyā Nirṇaya* says that he is in an especial manner following the path indicated by the Mahābhārata in all his injunctions.

The uncompromising hatred discovered by Śrī Vaiṣṇavas in regard to the God Śiva whom many among them would not so much as hear named was happily avoided by Madhwa though by proclaiming the supreme Duty of Viṣṇu he was forced to assign an inferior place to this God in his system.

3 ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ŚĀṆKARITE SYSTEM

We have already had to notice the attitude of Madhwa and his followers towards the system of

Sankara—an attitude which, intensified by the prosecution they had suffered, drove the oppressed to doom the heresiarch and his followers to eternal hell. How he would have behaved if he had had royal patrons to help him, or how his successors would have behaved if the persecution had begun after his departure, we cannot tell. But, coming as it did in his own time, and before the faith had definitely shaped itself and received its finishing touches, we have strong reasons to believe it contributed in no small measure to the inclusion of the *Maniman doctrine*. And though we shall in many cases do well to remember that 'the sources of religion lie hid from us', we are not perhaps far wrong, in this instance, if we suppose the singular hatred discovered to the departed guru of Advaitism and to his doctrines, far more than to the living followers of the faith, is due to this unfortunate occurrence. It would doubtless have been exceedingly magnanimous of Madhwa to have spared the personality of the Founder of Advaitism, who had had no hand whatever in the persecution. But he did not, and the hints thrown out in the *Thatpariya Ninaya* were taken up by his more zealous followers like Pandit Narayana and have been worked up into a most disgraceful libel ever written of the dead, which, mellowed by time has become sacred and is regarded as the first step to every student of Madhwa Theology. This libel is the companion volume to *Madhwa Vyaya* and is known as *Manimanyari*. Such are the bitter fruits of religious intolerance and as the persecutors could not be dealt with on the principle of like for like, the weaker party necessarily had to resort to abuse.

It need hardly be said that in this, as in so many other instances, practice has shown not little correspondence to the troublesome theory of

Dytias for as a matter of fact a few miserable fanatics apart who might be ignored the bulk of the sect have always moved on excellent terms with their Smartha brethren and among the Marathi followers of the matrimonial alliances between members of the different sects have been by no means uncommon. Even the most orthodox of the sect have no objection to dine in company with Smarthas herein happily avoiding the absurd extremes to which Sri Vaishnavas have carried matters and now find it so hard to retrace these wrong steps. And if people believe in what they are talking about and if intermarriages between the different sects of Brahmins is a right step to Social Reform then it is certainly much easier to bring about union between Madhwas and Smarthas than between Sri Vaishnavas and any other sect. It is to be hoped that the leaven of the West will serve as it has done in so many other ways to smoothen the already smooth relations of the sects and doctrinal differences will be made to occupy their proper place without disturbing social relations.

4. POPULAR FEATURES OF MADHWAISM

Madhwaism is an excellent exposition of Neo-Hinduism in that it can be grasped by the meanest believer there being but little of Occultism or Esotericism about it. Vishnu whom the worshipper is asked to regard as supreme is the *Puranic* Vishnu and is familiar to the common reader in those bright manifestations of His like Rama Krishna and the rest. The writer of this sketch has been severely handled by the orthodox among the Madhwas for daring to make this statement but he has already answered objections of this kind by his determination to write on *historical* lines. The worship of Vishnu consists in (1) *Ankara* marking the body with His symbols the five arms (2) *Namakarana* giving His

names to children or other objects of love, and (3) *Bhajana*, singing his glories. The special stress laid by some of the disciples on the last item has given rise to two divisions among them, called respectively *Dasakutas* and *Vyasakutas* but this is for all practical purposes a division without distinction.

The system therefore is on the dogmatic as well as practical side *positive* terribly positive, in this respect also it is diametrically opposed to Sankara's where, (according to Pandit Narayana), Absolute Nothingness is made, on the side of dogma to go by the name of *Brahman* and where also the Advaites have too often discovered a tendency to make religion an affair of the head of knowledge more than one of the heart and righteous character, the latter of which religion ought always to strive to be*. The Madhwa idea of God is in theory as well as practice anthropomorphic even in the last resort. But if we believe with Goethe that man really never knows how anthropomorphic he is and that "in every country the masses of the people are fetish worshippers" we shall be tempted to say perhaps that the faith of Madhwa is strong just where the other is weak.

We have already touched on the reform in connection with sacrifices. Sacrifice of animals in expectation of rewards in this world as well as in the other, is an old and world wide institution and no wonder that in India singularly remarkable for its conservatism it has lived on to our own day though showing but few signs of vigorous life now. The monstrous hopes that had once been held out to the masters of sacrifices in

* Religion is *being* and becoming not *talking* —Swami Vivekananda. Sankara has of course nothing to do with this evil future.

case they were properly gone through according to the strict letter of the law were bound to defeat themselves. The story of King *Nahusha* his aspiration for the office of Indra and his fall on account of his incivility to the sage *Agastya*—all seem to wear on their face proof of the desperate straits to which those who had held out impossible promises were driven to reduce themselves. Accordingly reaction against the sacrifice of animals set in even as early as the times of the Upanishads. The last passage of the *Narayana Upanishad* which goes by the name of (Sacrifice of self) might have been the composition of the great Buddha himself. Heralded by such early protests came the mighty mouthed Buddha and the spread of his faith meant the practical abolition of sacrifices.

With the renewed activity of Neo Hinduism sacrifices seem to have somewhat revived—though their day was assuredly gone. And the last vestiges of bloodshed connected therewith for ever were practically done away with by Vaishnavite reformers everywhere—who with one accord have all laid the most absolute emphasis on the sufficiency of the *Bhakti marga*—by Ramanuja before the time of Madhwa by Madhwa himself and Chaitanya Vallabha and others in later times. The thanks of the truly righteous are due to all of them on this account. Various were the reasons assigned or the devices adopted in the place of bloody sacrifices and Madhwa enjoined not indeed their complete abolition which is impossible for any one who bases his teachings on the authority of the *Śruti*s but the substitution of a lamb made of rice meal instead of the lamb of flesh and blood. Those who have any knowledge of the work of the *Samayita* in a Yagna that is of how the lamb is done to death on occasions of sacrifices still occasionally

seen performed by Smarthas, chiefly in some of the coast districts of the Madras Presidency—where the poor animal is gagged and despatched ‘without the shedding of blood,’ in a manner too horrid for plain description—have really very good reason to feel thankful to Madhwa for having stopped it so far at least as his own followers are concerned. We might also notice with pleasure that the chief temples and shrines managed in Madhwa interests are, as a rule, free from the objectionable services of *Devā Dasīs* (prostitutes) and the *pujaris* or priests are in many instances of much better social standing than the *kurukals* or other tribes akin to them.

The Puranic leanings of the faith have naturally enlarged the sphere of the professional *Pauranica* or the Rhetor. And as saints multiplied in course of time, red letter days also increased in number, which, together with the memorable days common to all sects have made the Madhwa year one round of festivals and saints days. Puranas in praise of Gods and of saints have also naturally multiplied in fearful numbers some possible many puerile if not positively harmful by reason of the low taste and lower accomplishments prevailing among the latter day Pandits who composed them. The Madhwa men and women have acquired the habit of attending *Puranic* recitals in large numbers and if the right kind of *Pauranicas* could be found or made to carry on his work, the institution may be made to serve excellent educational purposes. Such as it is it has resulted in a better organisation among them than among other sects and the average Madhwa knows more about his *Guru* and his faith than the average Smartha, to whom Sankaracharya often means no more than the ruling Priest at Sringeri or elsewhere.

5 GENESIS OF THE CARDINAL DOCTRINES OF THE FAITH

If it is once admitted that Religions have had a history like everything else and that each Reformer merely set to music the tones haunting a large number of ears it becomes easy for us to understand that Madhwaism has assimilated many things from preceding faiths and rejected others. We saw something of what it rejected in the Sankarite system and what it took in from Ramanojas. There were several other faiths flourishing in this part of India at the time of Madhwa's advent and in particular Jainism whose stronghold the Canaras had become after its downfall in the Chola and Pandya kingdoms. It would be a marvel if Madhwa's inquiring mind had not been influenced at all by these faiths and their practices. It is of course impossible to anatomise Madhwa doctrines and practices and group them and assign this to Jainism that to Saivism that to another and so on and so forth. But some of them bear clear impress of their origin and it is the legitimate duty of history to take note of them. It may well be that the founder of a sect might not himself have been able to trace the steps through which his mind had passed before he was able to give a definite shape to a doctrine. But though he could not discover it himself men who do not live in the midst of the hustle connected with a reform movement or live long after it and have no vested interests to guard can compare things in the cool shade of retirement and make inferences provided always that they hold themselves ready to change every one of them when solid reasons are given therefor.

There is moreover ample direct evidence in this case to prove that Madhwa had learned the systems of the twenty one rival faiths if only to

refute their arguments which he has done in his commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras. That he had had no scruple to learn even the *Mlechcha* language is proved by the statement in Madhwa Vijaya that he had picked up Persian enough to parley with hostile Mahomedans in North India. Under such circumstances it would have been exceedingly strange if he had not acquainted himself with the faith of the Jains by whom he was surrounded or even that of the Christians having a settlement at Kalyan or thereabout very near Udipi. In judging the attitude of the Founder of a faith we must make up our mind to exclude the attitude of the modern heads of *mutts* in regard to these matters. These latter repose on the glory of the Founder secure from fear of violence or spoliation under the most impartial government they have ever had and have the luck to be placed in situations where ignorance is bliss. They therefore very properly refuse to commit the folly of being *wise &c* learning anything.

The greatest difficulty in connection with an investigation of this kind is the sensitiveness of the followers of the faith under examination. In all cases of living faiths of which Madhwaism is one the orthodox from the way in which they are brought up feel shocked when their cherished beliefs are touched with intent to be cut up and professed theologians have always raised a cry of horror when religion is treated like any other institution. They are afraid that if for instance a particular doctrine of a *Guru* is shown to have been adapted from a previously known source the *Guru* loses his divinity and his system is revealed nature. They call him ungodly who rejects absurd miracles. They never bring themselves to agree that in the case of Madhwa it is glory enough for him to have composed the works that he has left behind and that his divine nature and his

greatness will not be one whit the less, for the total rejection of all the miracles associated with his name. He has been able to pour old wine into a new bottle without breaking it and that is divinely enough for any teacher. For "religions which stake their existence on the belief of men in certain occurrences true or alleged, instead of basing themselves on truths independent of time and place, and satisfying man's spiritual needs and aspirations—always run the risk of losing their hold on the thinking portion of the followers thereof"

Bearing in mind these difficulties as well as the fact that our examination has for its aim not certainly decrying the merits of any person, but search after historic truth, we might now look at two or three features of Madhwaism, whose genesis seems plain and easily traceable. To begin with there is the doctrine of the Divine Person with *attributes* repeated and upheld over so oft, and the substitution of 'meaty' lamb for the lamb of flesh. The doctrine and this healthy reform appear due to the strong Jain influence found in Canara at that time. The curious may compare the invocation of the guru before commencing the *Sutra Bhashya*, with the invocation of *Amara simha*. The Jain tenderness for animal life has had a long noble, and even ludicrous history, but the guru as one might expect based his reform on an episode in the Mahabharata.

Again we have seen that the doctrine of salvation solely through Vayu son of Vishnu is to be found in this form in Madhwaism alone of all the faiths of India. It is tempting though it is undesirable to connect this at once with the doctrine of the only other great faith which proclaims it—Christianity. But unless we are sure of the steps through which the one was metamorphosed into the other, asserting the Christian

origin of this doctrine serves only to wound the feelings of the orthodox. At this stage therefore we have merely to rest content with noting its singularity as well as the singular nature of another doctrine—that concerning eternal Hell—though in this latter case its origin can well be connected with the troubles under which the faith happened to spread.

Add to points of doctrine certain remarkable incidents and even expressions used by the Pandit in his life of the Gurn for instance the flight to the temple of Udipi in the boyhood of the teacher the fasting and prayer before the proclamation of the faith multiplying leaves and even such phrases as *giving out the good news* and *fishing for men*. These are too numerous to be put down as the results of mere coincidence though not of that kind which can force conviction on neutral minds. It is difficult to measure the work of forces which act through unconscious cerebration which is the only way of accounting for their presence in Madhwa Vijaya in the absence of more solid evidence.

6 SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE FAITH

It has often been given out by more than one writer that the mission of Ramanuja was one of Social Reform under a religious guise. The fact is pointed out in proof that Tamil has been placed by Vaishnavite saints on a footing of equality with Sanskrit which always was as it is now a sealed book to the multitude. If it ever was intended by Ramanuja or his successors as a Social Reform movement it has had a singular result at the present day for having asked for bread his disciples seem to have been variably favoured with stone! No such claim can possibly be advanced in regard to Madhwa. His teachings were mainly addressed to Brahmins. So

that except the Malavas of South Canara who own special allegiance to the Shivalli Brahmins there and a few hundreds of the gold smith caste in Coimbatore (who streak their foreheads after the manner of Madhwas though it is difficult to say that they do any thing more) there are no other non Brahmin adherents of the faith to be met with—at least as far as the writer is aware

The Guru it is to be feared has enjoined on his followers a system of fasting too rigorous to have healthy influence. Herein likewise one is tempted to see Jain influences whose overdoing of fasts has long passed the bounds of reason and common sense. The orthodox have to fast from years end to years end on one account or another. It is not that kind of fasting which is content with the mid day meal but absolute abstinence from eating and drinking. The average Madhwa physique has therefore had good reason to suffer in so far as any one has chosen to be really orthodox. Let it be understood that it is not fasting but the *overdoing* of it that is here had in view. The writer has reason to believe it is being overdone though under the high pressure of modern life the rigour of it is necessarily giving way. On widows heads the rigour falls with all its violence though this cannot move the sympathy of a people among whom widows are praised in proportion to their efforts to hasten their end.

It would be a marvel if after the experience of Europe and India in previous times Madhwa Theology had exercised any useful or healthy influence on *culture*. Examples of beautiful originals ruthlessly tampered with because of their connection with heathen pagan or heretic authors will readily occur to the reader of Papal history and Madhwaism has sure enough had its

own share is that kind of work, though on a very small scale. In the *Bhagavata*, for instance, no entire chapter, confessedly no interpolation, is omitted in Madhwa recitals, because it attributes ignorance to the Creator. And it has placed on a footing of equality masterpieces of art like the *Ramayana* of Valmiki or the *Mahabharata* of Vyasa, with the *Yamaka Bharata* of Madhwa, with an evident partiality for this ecclesiastical common-place of a pedantic age. Theology and sweet reasonableness seem always to have been constitutionally opposed to, and hence poles apart, from each other*.

But when all is said, the fact remains that Madhwaism is one of the most living of Indian faiths.

* Mr. Achar's appreciation of the literary merits of Madhwa Vyasa and Manimanga is the latest illustration hereof.

PHILOSOPHY OF MADHWACHARYA

By PROF S SUBBA RAO, M.A

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT the middle of the twelfth century, India south of the Vindhya was being governed by native potentates. The Aryan community was habitually giving serious and due attention to its religious philosophical and literary pursuits though there might have been considerable disturbance by war or political changes. It was already some centuries since the Buddhist influence had been completely subverted, or had declined for want of political support. By this time the Vedanta system had come to be studied as expounded by Sri Sankaracharya while the older orthodox expositions were consigned to oblivion. It should not be forgotten that besides the Vedas Vedangas Puranas Itihāsas etc there was an earlier literature in every other branch of knowledge. Generally people had still intense faith in that the Vedas etc are the repositories of truth and wisdom though the common reader or thinker did not hope to derive therefrom a systematic idea of their contents. The philosophy of Maya was a most fascinating study and its influence was widespread. But thoughts of opposite schools could not be blotted out of existence they were only smouldering till they should be blown into a flame by a strong breath as of Sri Ramanna or of Sri Madhwa. The former bases his exposition on an earlier treatise called Bodhayana Vritti and the latter institutes a comparative study of the common and oldest authorities and interprets them in the light of sound logic giving full value to the internal evidence before he arrives at his conclusions.

This feature gives the study of Sri Madhwa's works a historical importance as throwing light either on a very early stage, or on different stages, of philosophical thinking

THE INFLUENCES IN THE COUNTRY

Sri Madhwacharya is generally known over South India as a great religious reformer, and an orthodox commentator on the Brahma Sutras, and the famous Ten Upanishads. He was born of a Tulu Brahmin, in a village near the small town of Udipi in the District of South Canara. Of late, there has been a slight question about the date of his birth some holding it to be about 1118 A.D., others about 1199 A.D. At this time the narrow strip on the Western Coast beyond the Ghats was comparatively secure from molestation. It had long ago become the asylum of many Brahmin families as well as of Brahminical learning. Here the native princes extended to them their liberal patronage while the people cherished a veneration for them. The archives of the old literature which the immigrants had brought with them were not exposed to the destructive influence of foreign invasions. Here too the traces of some ancient cults and several aspects of the Aryan religious life may to this day, point to an interesting phase of the past history. The worship of Vishnu especially in the form of Sri Krishna so general on that coast, is a sure indication that the influence of the *Bhagavatas* was great there if not all-sweeping. Even when the country was convulsed with the study of the Advaitic Philosophy there did not cease to be staunch adherents of older systems. The prevailing study, however had not much interfered with the crystallised religious beliefs and practices. The religious and philosophical literature largely consisted of dialectics and polemics full of sophistry mostly written in the

old style* Great erudition was often displayed to confound the ordinary thinker which filled the masses with wonder and blind admiration. Such was the character of the learning that commanded approbation generally of scholars too. Hence great was the difficulty in the way of one holding opposite views. The only hopeful course was to ransack the authoritative literature, Vedic and later and to replace sophistry by sound reasoning that may not prove self destructive. In the circumstances was Sri Madhwa placed when he came forward as a teacher. As himself a pupil he had begun by respectfully pointing out the faults and fallacies in the works taught to him. When he was himself challenged to expound the established system, he won admiration by his perfect familiarity with the traditional interpretation and exposition. After giving proofs of the intuitive yet masterly insight into the philosophical lore he discovered in the view of the unbiassed of course very emphatically how the established system was not satisfactory either in the light of sacred authorities or in respect of accurate reasoning. Naturally he was next challenged to expound the true Vedic Philosophy and he chose to present his views by means of quotations from works which were at the time admitted to be great authorities, and by means of the Logic recognised by those authorities viz. the Vedas Pancharatna Itihasa and Brahmatarka to which last constant reference is given in his works.

THE SCOPE OF THE PAPER

Thus we see that he does not claim any originality on his part for the system. He comes forward only as an orthodox interpreter of the system which the Brahma Sutras are intended to teach. A foreign critic justly observes that the

* Many of them are now lost

system of Philosophy taught by Sri Madhwacharya does not seem to commend itself to many simply because they are prejudiced by the name Dualistic Philosophy which he thinks is a misnomer and that if properly presented it will find more readers in the world than any other. Accordingly it is proposed to sketch here a general view of the cardinal principles and of the general course of reasoning employed to maintain them. Indeed the task is beset with peculiar difficulties for the positions and aspects of the system cannot be effectively described and presented unless a searching contrast is instituted between this and all the other schools of thought both ancient and modern and to make its distinctive character sufficiently clear a huge volume may have to be written. But the task here undertaken is a very humble one. This is intended only as a preparation of the mind for more elaborate study and research into this philosophical literature.

PHILOSOPHY DEFINED

At the present day the term Philosophy is used in connection with many branches of study and the reader would be glad to be told what notion he should form here by the word. Etymologically it means Love of wisdom and this sense may not seem to suit its present function to convey the most generalised course of thought. An enquiry however intended to arrive at the most generalised knowledge of things and the spirit in which that knowledge is to be sought may be taken to be the full meaning of the word. For the Love of wisdom is and must be the motive power to speed the journey on that long and tedious road of enquiry. Now wisdom cannot be what it is if it did not imply invariable reference to *TRUTH* or reality or facts that is to things as such and as they are in the given place and time. For the purposes of the present

paper, philosophy may be taken to mean (1) A system of knowledge always having reference to *Truth*, that is things as they are both in their gross forms and in their subtle and ultimate states and (II) A system of teaching or writing which is devoted to investigation into the nature of things as a means of attaining to such a knowledge of *Truth*

TRUTH

"*Truth*,"—It is a most charming word Under this name, anything might acquire an importance and attractiveness which need not be real To many, '*Troth*' seems to stand apart from things that are true For they are prone to think that '*Truth*' as forming part and parcel of things has nothing of that grandeur which they would or could see in the abstract '*Truth*' Therefore, the Acharya first interrupts this pleasant notion and tells them that '*Truth*' is inseparable from the things that are true Accordingly, his system deals with the ultimate and most general question, what things are fundamentally true, why they should be accepted as such what relations do subsist and can be logically conceived to subsist or maintained on authority between the fundamentals or between them and their products, or between the several products

MADHWA AS PHILOSOPHER

Since very few of the modern scholars know him to be a philosopher in the highest sense of the word an examination of the ground work of Philosophy is worth making at the outset A reasoned and general system of religion of any stability must stand on a worthy philosophical view of all the related things in the range of knowledge His works clearly show that he worked at his system with such a persuasion and he has written more on points of philosophy than on those of religion Accordingly, he has written a

set of works called Prakaranas that is small necessary treatises dealing severally with points connected with the main system. These inculcate those principles of logic which should safely guide the thinker through the intricate maze of enquiry. It is therefore of great advantage at the very threshold to give or receive the warning that at every step we should be careful not to jump out of the only ground on which we can possibly stand.

KNOWLEDGE ITS RELATIVITY

Now then the enquiry starts naturally with a survey of that fundamental ground namely Thought or Knowledge. The nature of that ground must be certainly examined for only on this available ground Sri Madhwa rests his philosophy as well as his religion. Thought or Knowledge whether it is the experience of common parlance or some essential property of some substratum or that substance itself it cannot be what it is or most be when the Knower and the Known correlated to Thought are denied or are not admitted for such denial cannot cease to be self destructive. Thus in the Acharyas system consistency rules and exercises a sovereign power over all Thought and its correlative and must therefore commend itself to all those that respect the Laws of Thinking. In his view nothing may deserve to be called philosophy which does not stand the test of this sovereign rule for this alone can warrant the fundamentals that may be arrived at. In this view all the theories that have been or will ever be propounded to belong to all times and they are only subject to the force of a current that may at a time submerge some and allow some others to float and prevail on the surface. Hence the position he takes up as the mere expounder of Sri Badarayana's system is neither inconsistent nor without proof.

THE VEDAS AND LOGIC

In his view too the Vedas are the representatives (in sound) of the ideas of all times and he can recognise the authoritativeness of the Vedas in a sense or in a degree in which even other teachers of Orthodoxy have not done or cannot do for to these they are no better than phenomenal things of the limited world. Whereas Sri Madhwa considers the Vedas as both Truth and means of knowing the Truth permanent and absolute. This position *might seem* inconsistent with the logical character specially claimed for the system. It is however a mistake due to mis conception of the function or province of Logic which by itself cannot become an independent means of knowledge : *i. e.* of knowing the Truth.

THE PROVINCE OF LOGIC

The familiar I or the individual self is evidently the primary factor or basis involved or implied in knowledge either as a means or as the resultant or as something without which no knowledge could be. The nature of its working exhibits a purpose to which means is adapted and generally implies means and causes beyond itself. Now the means of knowledge has been generally recognised as three fold viz. the Sense Perception the Word and Reasoning or Logic. The sphere of the senses is after all admitted as very limited and logic or reasoning does not *independantly* furnish facts. On the other hand it has only to examine the facts furnished by any independent means of knowledge. Perception or the Word as the case may be. Though the modern thinker may find it difficult to understand how the Word may be such a means the subject has been sifted by Aryan scholars with a marvellous power of intuition and consistent Logic. And so he would do well to consider the subject with the defence. The Aryan thinker concedes that

the sphere of the Word is far wider than that of the senses first, this is true even in the case of human testimony. Admitting for the present that the Word can furnish facts which are beyond the range of the senses, we may see that all reasoning must proceed on the facts furnished by sense perception or testimony. In the process of reasoning we deduce *new* facts but all the same, the reasoning is by nature so dependent upon the facts furnished by other means, that it can never rise to the rank of an independent means of knowledge. Logic is in the first place useful for testing the consistency of successive observations and notions and correcting the errors that may creep into the various sources of knowledge, and secondly, by virtue of consistency in the course of nature, for assuming certain other facts or relations not directly known by Pratyaksha or Word. Thus the real function or scope of Logic is that it must subserve the authority of the sense perception or of the Word and that Logic and Testimony of the Word may both unitedly elucidate certain truths without the shadow of inconsistency about them. Perhaps there is no great thinker who does not recognise this very essential and primary principle but this recognition is after all a mere promise and it is no assurance of its observance. No thought is worthy of any regard, no item of knowledge is of any value, unless and until it is thoroughly examined with reference to its contents and is found to be free from the self destructive inconsistency. Accordingly, the Acharya has in proving sure every step he takes to pass in review the positions taken by all the other writers. Very often statements conveying really distinct ideas are misunderstood as conveying one and the same idea or *vice versa*, and against such mistakes he has to warn us. Again, the first principles often happen to be so

general and subtle that they cannot be easily grasped unless the contrary is seen side by side to be absurd

Since thought or idea is the motive power that urges us onward in the path of enquiry every detail of the enquiry must be cast in the mould of thought or idea when that may be said to be within our grasp. The Acharya's system therefore opens with an examination of evidence

EVIDENCE OR PRAMANA

General

The term Pramana or evidence is by most philosophers understood only as the means by which things are apprehended but the Acharya goes a step further and recognises the apprehension (knowledge) to be the primary and direct evidence of the thing that is apprehended for when the idea is up it does not imply any medium for its relation to the thing represented while the means having led to the result namely the apprehension with draws itself as it were from the field of idea not intervening in any manner or degree between the knowledge and the known. That is to say the organs for instance only help on the faculty of understanding but do not form any part of the understanding when it has risen and do not require the idea again to pass through them to the object. Hence the Acharya lays down that apprehension or knowledge is the primary and direct evidence of what is perceived. The secondary evidence or the means of evidence is of three kinds though some other systems recognise four or more. The three sources of knowledge recognised by the Acharya are (1) sense perception or the senses known as Pratyaksha (2) Reasoning or Ratocination (3) Word or Testimony while Upamana or Analogy admitted by others is shown to be a variety of Ratocination or Reasoning

This classification of *Pramanas* (the means of evidence) makes it clear that according to this system experiential *thought* or *idea* as any other fact claims for the law of Causation a fundamental character which some thinkers may hesitate to allow. Whether *thought* or *idea* is essentially a new product at every step or only a disclosure the antecedent circumstances not being the material cause cannot be said in any manner to form part and parcel of the resulting or the disclosed *idea*. For instance light the object place time and vision all may be required and contribute to the rise of a particular *idea* but do not constitute the *idea*. In every act of knowing the relation of the Knower and the Known or rather the relation of Knowledge to the Known is direct : *e* implies no *med ac*. How to jump out of this relation it is not possible to understand. So long as the faculty remains what it is this relation must be. Bereft of this relation anything can be called knowledge. If we deny the very denial implies an *idea* or it is the expression of an *idea*. Therefore the means or circumstances that are invariably the antecedents of a particular *idea* becomes the evidence or the medium of knowledge of a thing not directly but through the *idea* or knowledge which they are instrumental in producing. Hence these are called Secondary or *Mediate* Evidence as only serving to produce that which is the immediate evidence of the known. To define it succinctly *Evidence is either that (the idea) which by virtue of its own nature has direct reference to what is cognised or that which is the means of or help to such cognition*. Both the immediate and the mediate must stand the tests that may be applied when necessary to prove their validity. Every *idea* or apprehension as it arises implies its own validity by virtue of its nature. It

does not involve or imply (for it cannot) a doubt of itself. On the other hand the validity of any idea or thought may be questioned or impeached at the instance of some other idea or thought which claims greater or absolute validity and effectually contracts that prior notion. Now two points are to be kept distinct in view—(1) The Genesis of an idea or notion and (2) its validity.

(1) The rising of a Notion or Thought depends upon the means circumstances or causes which are the antecedents.

(2) As already pointed out a notion rises implying its own validity : i.e. it does not rise implicating a suspicion of its own validity for it often induces action in expectation of the realisation of the purpose—and in the natural course the notion the action and the realisation do in very many cases correspond together and the notion of its validity often stands tested. When any notion is rejected as false the explanation of its invalidity is to be found in the means and antecedent circumstances. For when a perception produced by virtue of the means of knowledge an expectation of realising the thing induces the necessary action but if the action is not fruitful the perception or notion is rejected as illusive. Here only the means etc. are considered to be at fault defective or erroneous or misleading. So it is clear that naturally and primarily no notion or idea implies a suspicion of itself. Such a suspicion is always caused by a subsequent corrective notion or thought.

All that has been said of evidence and knowledge plainly supposes the relation of knowledge on the one hand to the Knower of whom it is an attribute and on the other to the Known to which it refers generally as something different and distinct from itself. The Acharya holds this

as the most of all the first principles of his philosophy—namely *there is no perception notion or idea which might stand unrelated to the knower and the known* for all inquiry must start with and all acceptable conclusions must be in terms of such knowledge otherwise any system of thought reluctant to recognise this fundamental position must be *thinks stand self condemned*. Besides the three Pramāṇas accepted in this system there are several others named by other schools of thought which are however shown to be varieties of any one of the three Pratyakṣa or sense perception and Anumāna or Reasoning are readily admitted as the two sources of knowledge derived by experience.

THE NATURE OF THE WORD AS EVIDENCE

The authoritativeness of the Word or Testimony has a peculiar significance and requires a special effort of the modern mind to perceive the force of admitting it as such.

Sabda or Testimony may for all practical purposes be supposed a record rather a permanent exponent of ideas (eternal or other as the case may be) which not being within the range of our sense experience are still conveyed to us by the power of the Word.

It has been questioned whether Logic is first or the authority (Testimony). A careful review of the works of Sri Madhwacharya discloses the fact that there can be no sort of inconsistency or contradiction between them. Logic or logical principles we know are founded upon the relation of things in actual observation. If we hold that logical principles are valid and useful in questions dealing with such matters of observation we can with equal truth and profit admit their validity and usefulness in the province of the authority or testimony. The Acharya does

not draw any great distinction of kind between the authority of the Senses and that of Testimony. If the scientist of to-day would say that he can detect things beyond the range of the naked eye with the aid of a telescope or microscope or with some light rays similar to the well-known X rays the Acharya tells us that even the gross physical senses when refined by the processes of Yoga or other means in the laboratory of one's own physical frame—they are capable of performing functions which we now deny of them. Now the testimony would be nothing but the record of observations by the refined senses and organs. Then the principles of Logic which we restrict to the province of the meagre sense experience are only and naturally extended to the whole field of knowledge and means thereof. And it is hereby clear that our restriction after all evinces a sort of narrow mindedness.

Again we should clearly bear in mind that logical principles must follow actual facts and the facts cannot primarily arise in accordance with any assumption. Baseless assumption that we may be apt to make. If the Acharya emphasises the absolute authority of Testimony and tells us that all Logic is nothing but a consistent construing of the Testimony as it is of sense experience it is this truth that he has successfully brought home to the mind of thinkers. Likewise he very often warns us against the very great and frequent danger of being led away by false generalisations and analogies which are but attempts to connect the unconnected things by a stretch of imagination. He constantly therefore draws our attention to the individual character and nature of facts and things—a position most fundamental in the genesis as well as the history of knowledge. The difference—

between the individual things is as essential a part of each as agreement or similarity. So we are told and we also observe the points of community are not identical but are only similar standing forth or running side by side like parallel lines.

To start with another important and common mistake has to be warned against. The logical principles are not the means of knowledge but they are only certain laws that obtain between the ideas in so far as these are tested to be true with reference to the things implied by them. So when we say that these principles follow actual facts it should always be kept vivid in the mind that the facts are *proved* ideas not not fancies.

The above explanation of the Authority of Testimony (Word) might appear to conflict with our favorite view that the Vedas are eternal like God. They are not even admitted as the composition of the Deity through whose grace they become revealed to holy men. A little consideration will show that the seeming conflict is of no real consequence while the theory itself turns our attention to two important conceptions. Are we to suppose that we live in a world which is by time and space unconnected with all the past and all the future? Or are we to suppose that we live in it connected with the whole stream of time and space? Granting that our present world is a creation of some thousand years could we deny the existence of similar worlds both in the past and in the future? If we deny it the inductive hazard should become altogether unreliable. If we grant it in the past of what benefit should it be to us except by way of making us wiser with a record of the past history? Through the eternity of time how

many should be admitted in the past? We cannot possibly stop without alighting upon an infinite series of things facts and ideas worlds and records representing them. The recognition of an infinite series is a clear explanation of the term eternity. So in the first place every great thinker perceives that the Testimony of words must essentially embody such eternal ideas. Next when the distinction is drawn between the eternal and the human (the natural and artificial so to say) Testimony there is a compulsion to see the difference between their import. The modern scholar might however hope to easily dispose of the question on the ground of ignorance as to authorship. But this cannot be a satisfactory solution to one who perceives and distinguishes the character of the various ideas and their basis. Whatever the solution of the question may ultimately be no difficulty can however be conceived in the way of admitting the authoritativeness of *true ideas*. Hence the Acharya divides the authoritative Testimony into *Apaurusheya* (that which is not the composition of any person) and *Paurusheya* (composition of some person). This distinction implies the assumption that the former wholly consists of true ideas which become the standard for others but do not require to be proved by some other standard whereas the latter Testimony admits of test or demonstration as against the ideas of the former and of sense experience. We know that the ultimates should only be self-evident truths and even these are to be perceived as such by every individual who has to acquire knowledge. Then we cannot say that the process of cognition or perception can make the eternal things and ideas non-eternal or changeable. If the eternal testimony should have been seen from time to time represent such ideas etc its

authoritativeness arises from itself. The general principle in determining whence arises the validity of a perception is that the means of knowledge, not being defective or interfered with, leads to a correct apprehension by its own virtue.

Further, it may be sufficient that the simplest elements of language are eternal to be only discovered and used by us at different stages of advancement, for which we are endowed with faculties. Hence the fifty elements alone of Speech might be the Acharya would allow, sufficient to be admitted as Eternal. They are said to be all pervading i.e., they must be admitted to be everywhere. All occurring everywhere, a particular combination when revealed to a particular Saint and recognised by his superior vision to be the Eternal Record or Representative of certain ideas the Combination is a piece of the Vedas. A fuller discussion of this point must form the subject of a separate work.

If a certain item of sense perception is indisputably correct and valid it would then be impossible to accept as valid a statement contradicting that. Moreover our understanding of the language is generally based on our sense experience and only through this can language help us to conceive things and facts, when these are beyond the range of direct observation or of Inference. Thus the Acharya recognises the importance of the Sense Perception as the first opening of the gates of Knowledge to be acquired through other means than self intuition. In human nature intuition though the very basis, is yet limited in many aspects in the case of the souls.

The next point to be constantly borne in mind is that if Sense Perception furnishes facts on which the process of reasoning primarily

depends, the Word does it on a larger scale in relation to what may lie beyond the range of our senses. Neither *Pratyaksha* nor *Sabda* (Word) can be treated as a variety of *Inference*, since the processes involved in this are not required in the other two.

OBJECTIVE REALITY

From what has been said it is clear that the theory of knowledge as maintained here implies objective existence and reality of things, facts, or aspects in relation to the Self as the Knower. Then the reality of such objective existence or aspect is the first of the philosophical points to be considered. From the logical conception of a fact or Reality, there is no necessity for supposing that whatever is not eternal or unchanging cannot be Truth or reality or fact. Even a phenomenon that may last for a single moment is a fact, and the perception thereof as a phenomenon is a true and correct perception. In the first place, Knowledge generally implies an object as existing out of itself. With reference to such an object the primary notion takes the form "it is a thing," more correctly, "it is" (the positive). The notion 'it is not' (the negative), surely depends upon the primary positive notion 'it is', for without this reference the second notion does not arise. Hence we have a practical definition — That with reference to which the notion 'it is not' cannot primarily arise at all times or at all places constitutes the existence (*being*) of a thing. When perception arises of the knowing Self or of anything else, its existence is implied in the very first apprehension as also the reality or validity of the apprehension. If in certain cases the perception happens to be at variance with the facts implied in it, and it is to be given up as false some other perception, at least, that which proves the preceding to be a mistake must certainly claim

this reality and validity otherwise every notion would have to be given up as a mistake without proof—a position that cannot save one from self-contradiction. In fact no proof or argument has yet been advanced free from this serious objection to prove the unreality of the objective world or even of the different aspects of the very knowing Self. Numerous are the attempts made to show that knowledge cannot comprehend anything except itself that is to say ideas themselves stand as the Knower and the Known and such relation must be false—this view is agreeable to some thinkers for these philosophers think that since nothing can be proved or stated except in terms of ideas the objective relation implied by them is all due to some unaccountable nature ever tending to mistake—perhaps this opinion alone excepted. Against all such positions the Acharya proves how they are on an edge and shows that they invariably fling themselves into self-contradiction and ignore the operation of the Law of Causation for the unreal cannot have an appearance even cannot become the object of misapprehension and cannot therefore be casually connected with any effect.

As already pointed out it is not possible to declare *all* ideas to be altogether illusions other wise even in the sphere of common experience the distinction of true and false ideas should cease to be of any value or meaning. Supposing that *all* ideas are illusions we should analyse the mental phenomenon of illusion or misapprehension so as to find an explanation. The analysis shows that there is an object positively presented and it does not essentially vanish but that aspect alone vanishes which is superimposed or super added by the mind which is misled by its similarity etc. to think of other things when the thing presented is perceived through defective senses or

faulty means. Thus the analysis forces the acceptance of *two real things* (viz. the thing presented and that another which is suggested by the point of similarity) without which no misapprehension can ever arise. The *being* of what is presented but not perceived as it is becomes precluded of what is suggested by force of association. Then if the notion which might imply the unreality of the world of difference be a notion having reference to some aspect or attribute of something else this at least must be admitted to be true or real. If on the other hand the subsequent notion too should arise without any reference at all it cannot correct any preceding notion.

DIFFERENCE OR DIFFERENCE

Further the ideas of distinction cannot be accounted for so long as no intrinsic essential peculiarities are admitted in the things themselves which are connected as causes with the several notions. Therefore the Acharya holds that in the proper exercise of the senses and faculties all the apprehensions or notions are representatives of Truth. Hence the unimpeached notions implying relations prove difference to be a truth whether it is in *things* or *aspects*. This is the next most fundamental principle.

DIFFERENCE—WHETHER CONVENTIONAL

Could we not dispose of the notion of difference as conventional? We cannot for if a certain distinction be called conventional it does not mean it is false. We have the ordinary distinction as positive and negative. In the ordinary acceptation it cannot be proved absolutely unreal. It does not cease to be even if we use the terms in a different order. Wherein has convention its own origin? It is not possible to conceive that mere convention could make the

distinction which is not. On the other hand when distinction already exists convention steps in in the use of the term or of any such mark to denote the distinctness and thereby to help memory and further thought and facilitate communication. So the term is conventional and it may not matter whether this term or that is appropriated to denote this or that aspect or thing those under consideration. Such terms either need not be unreal. Nothing could be found to prove that things causing the notion of difference come into existence or vanish merely by virtue of convention. It cannot be supposed that the notion is baseless i.e. arises without sufficient cause. When we are thus compelled to find the cause of it in the very nature of things by what virtue could convention make the objective difference an unreality? We may perhaps by an effort of will differently use the terms positive and negative and palpably there might be no inconvenience in a few cases when however the genesis of the terms positive and negative as embodying the antecedent thoughts is investigated into it is not possible to hold that they have to represent something arbitrary or unconnected with all true ideas. A simple yet apt illustration we find in the commonest terms *up* and *down*. Might we not freely change the denotation of these two words and say 'We are going up hill when we descend and We go down hill when we ascend?' We might but the distinction between ascent and descent was not produced and could not be annihilated by the use of the terms.

Many other explanations are sought to deny the validity of the notion of difference as well as the objective difference involved in the notion. Some of them may be examined before Sri Madhwa's conclusion is stated. The notion

duality is supposed to be induced and regulated by time and space evidently on the assumption that they are unreal in themselves. It may be just asked whether they are unreal on the strength of any evidence as being so given to understanding or as not being given at all. First the arguments or considerations employed in proving the ideas of time and space as inferential are no longer considered valid. We see that the ideas of time and space are not the result of sense perception nor do they seem to be in the sphere of consciousness *before* other objects are apprehended. The molecular sense which is said to contribute to the inferential nature of this idea is to be questioned as not directly giving rise to any consciousness. To take one by one—Is space itself to be considered as existing or as non-existing real or unreal? Is the idea of space necessary for the perception of duality i.e., is it present before the notion of duality can arise either in respect of the subject or things external? Or does it create duality which is nowhere? If space be no other than the knowing self could or does it become the object of any such notion as implies or might imply its identical character with the subject? In the first place it would not do to say that the non-existent space induces any idea or notion. If compelled by fear of inconsistency we would not abandon the only ground under our feet viz. Thought we must conceive space as something existing.

Now what distinctions are suggested or are denoted by the terms *here* and *there*—how could they or why should they be unreal? It is often supposed that space is indivisible i.e. something that has no parts and therefore the divisions as *here* and *there* must be unreal. This view might be taken with reference to

many other objects of knowledge however the answer to the question of space would enable the thinker to find the solution in other cases as well. Is the distinction of *here* and *there* to be admitted as novel because it would otherwise make space other than what it is? Is space to be conceived as something having parts or no parts. The latter alternative cannot be adopted since it is inconceivable how such a thing could ever give occasion for the distinction as *here* and *there*. If a geometrical point could be conceived at any time to become expanded into the unlimited space we could see that the expansion must be false and that the fancied distinctions are necessarily false too. On the other hand the conception of the point precludes all such imagination nor do we find anything to support any possible theory that space so evidently unlimited might become contracted into a point or resolve itself into the Knower or Knowledge or into nothing.

Most space like the notion of space be absolutely identical with the thinking Self? Supposing that to be we cannot see how the distinctions as *here* and *there* implied by the nature of such a self could be given up as unreal for the self at least must be real. Nothing could be admitted to be real if the properties that constitute it are not real too. But whatever may be the reality of the properties it might be said that that cannot warrant the assumption of separate entities real and absolute which are indispensable only for the notion of duality or plurality. This objection is futile. The distinction in properties or aspects, however inseparable they may be is sufficient to prove the main characteristic of knowledge always implying the relation of the Knower and the Known. Similarly if the same characteristic of

knowledge should invariably imply the distinction in properties or things which cannot be part and parcel of the thinking Self these alone could not be rejected as unreal

If the Self being essentially Knowledge pervade absolutely everything whence is the necessity for it to indulge the notions of *here* and *there* Perhaps Ignorance or Nescience might be brought into account for the notion but when the Self or the self knowledge is supposed to be all pervading or all comprehensive the nature position and relation of that Ignorance cannot be consistently conceived or explained and any explanation would necessitate the presupposition of time and space which should thereby become doubly reassured as to their separate existence

If any statement should be found in the Vedas conveying the absolute identity of time and space with the thinking self it must submit to the same examination and is liable to the same objections On the other hand such texts only forbid the supposition that the all pervading Paramatman could become divided up or affected differently by anything or by any conditions for instance as some would have really or falsely by the Ignorance which infects the self—the Ignorance *Maya* or *Avidya* (positive or negative) which is supposed to explain away all notions of difference Let us just see what the Chandogya text VII 15 means Substituting the word *space* for Brahman or Atman in the text we shall have

Space alone is above is below is behind before to the right to the left Space is all this What should we consider to have been gained or lost by this process? Should we directly conclude that Brahman or self is space? How could that help us out of the difficulty of accounting for the distinction? If the Self is so

pervading and is no other than Space, even the supposed Ignorance cannot help us in accounting for the notions of the Self as being *above*, *below*, etc. For the Ignorance itself has to be conceived in terms of Time or Space.

TIME AND SPACE

Whatever be the nature of the Self, limited or unlimited, the notion of distinction as *here* and *there* in space cannot be explained, if space is not conceived as a real whole having parts. The idea of a whole is not inconsistent with the idea that it has parts. The idea of the parts of a whole does not require partitions of a foreign substance between the several parts or even their separation from the whole and from each other. When the whole is so broken up and the pieces are separately presented, the idea of the whole and of the relation of the parts into that whole cannot always arise as when the whole is presented with all the parts intact. A wall between two rooms being itself in space, should it be on that account supposed incapable of forming the partition between the parts of space constituting the rooms? If it could not we might say what cannot make a partition cannot enter into space : it cannot be in space. So we should arrive at the absurd conclusion that a wall cannot be in space. Whatever is observed to be in space is not observed to be also one with space unlimited and impartible. Further if space could not be conceived to have parts it might be asked whether things come to be in space each encompassing all at the same time. If it were so we should not be able to think what resistance might be. On the other hand, limited bodies admitted as existing in space, and resisting each other cannot but prove that space has parts, which do not require to be cut asunder for the

also of that conception. The wall is considered as a partition but indicates that the space in general is distinguished from its parts to be conceived as rooms or occupied by other limited bodies or unoccupied also by side.

Thus it is not possible to conceive that there is any item of correct understanding which identifies by virtue of its own character the Knowing Self with space. Similarly a more elaborate investigation would show the fallacious character of every position taken to prove Time to be identical with the Knowing Self and that only the assumption of the one absolute existence without a second but not the force of evidence available would compel us to endeavour after this identifying. Hence parts or aspects of an identical whole can be perceived as such only when they are related in the whole. In the Spiritual Being the parts (aspects) are *ideally* separable while in the Material *physically* also.

Such considerations do regard to knowledge to evidence to the principle of consistency and to the law of causation have determined the view taken by Sri Madhwa in respect of Time and Space. He therefore tells us that Time and Space are two entities which are always and directly in the cognition of the Knowing Self and whenever other objects are perceived the Self at once casts them into the mould of time and space ever present to it and has shown all attempts to prove these notions as inferential to involve the process of begging the question or some other fallacy.

PERVASION AND DIFFERENCE

Does the character of the Knowing Self require the eschewing of all notion of difference? It is supposed that the Knowing Self is all pervading and possibly nothing can be out of

itself, should the perception that things exist as distinct objects of knowledge, i.e., distinct from the Knower and the knowledge, be unreal or incorrect? But as already shown with reference to space, the Self of all pervasion could not in itself in any manner become affected by the existence of objects. Further the conception of pervasion itself would become more significant when there are things to be pervaded by the Self. If the nature of Self is once granted to be capable of cognising itself or anything distinct from itself, for that does not require what is perceived always to stand aloof from it or to be contained in itself. Even as space the Knowing Self of all pervading need not become divided into disconnected pieces by the presence of different limited objects comprehended in itself. Now in granting a Supreme Being or Paramatma, personal or impersonal, such omnipresence has to be granted for various reasons which we need not discuss here. In His case all that has been just now said of pervasion would be required to be admitted. But every Knowing Self engaged in working out its own destiny cannot be proved as omnipresent or as comprehending in itself all things given in its understanding.

Let us next suppose that *knowledge pervades* all objects even then why should they become part and parcel of knowledge. Certainly the idea of pervasion does not necessitate the admission of identity between that which pervades and that which is pervaded nor does the term comprehension help us in conceiving that what comprehends is necessarily identical with what is comprehended. Therefore there is no getting out of this relativity and we should face the worst contradiction that could be conceived if we should say that there is no relation to the relations perceived. Without

adopting such an inconsistent position we cannot make the statement or indulge in the notion that the related Knower and the Known are *always* one. Or if self-consciousness be granted and if, in every act of knowing the Known is no other than Self sleep also must be a conscious state as truly as *mudita* or as the state of *Dhyana*.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE SOUL

Perceptions of pain and pleasure and of the identity of the suffering Self (the sufferer) under them—do they require the erasure of all distinctions? That cannot be for if pain pleasure etc. should be merely verbal distinctions there ought not to be distinct ideas for when strictly synonymous words or terms are used ideas are not different. Further the avoidance of some and the seeking after of some others cannot but imply intrinsic difference between the two sets of things. Suppose each term describes the Self and nothing but Self in a particular aspect even then the distinctions cannot become merely verbal.

The several senses are differently affected by different objects and the notions of pleasure and pain are realised as different and as being caused by different objects or circumstances at different times in different individuals in different degrees of intensity. An easy explanation of these seems to be found in calling them appearances. But if it were possible to find indisputable evidence that all appearances are absolutely baseless the absolute oneness of all might somehow be postulated. On the other hand the appearances changing as they may be primarily claim the recognition of their being connected intimately too with some basis. The changes or appearances are at the same time different in different things permanently suggesting a difference in their base or causes. But the oneness of basis could be thought of only when

the differences are fancifully or dogmatically set aside. Or if they should all be supposed to be the essence of one Self the distinctions must always be as true as the very self and these cannot be accounted for except by admitting self-consciousness and different aspects in the Self—which is of course incompatible with the theory of oneness since that consciousness might become the evidence of other existences. Perhaps this insuperable difficulty has led to the assumption of a Knowledge which is to be unconnected with the Knower and the Known. Anyhow the notion that implies a knowing of the world outside the Self should be left without a consistent explanation.

Further the self has no necessity of knowing itself either for it cannot when pure since it has no aspects of its own and it should not become the *agent* of perceiving or when conditioned the conditions cannot be supposed in any manner to interfere with the self and confer on it the virtue of perceiving since the nature of the self is unassailable (*Ahanya*) and only these conditions might be said to perceive or act in any manner towards not the self but something else *which* is not. It is therefore unintelligible to say that the self *knows* nothing but itself in *knowing* the world. Moreover no perception is seen naturally to arise as I know the world which is not. Therefore to start with the assumption that the distinctions do not exist and for the purpose of proving it to assume another entity of which existence cannot be consistently predicted in any admissible sense are not agreeable to Sri Badarayana and to Sri Madhwa who are therefore found to adhere to the older philosophical view as conveyed in the heart of the RgVeda. Now that the varied experiences emphatically show in the light of admissible knowledge that the spiritual beings in the several bodies are finite and each has

to work separately for its own development and towards the final goal the authorities may be received with satisfaction especially when as shorn above the truth of difference between soul and soul is perceived to be more than a probability. All the foregoing discussions are but preliminary just to indicate how Sri Madhwa was forced to differ from the views of his predecessors. Since a more elaborate presentation of his reasons for the difference is beyond the scope of this sketch we may directly pass on to his philosophical analysis both of the moral and physical world.

THE AIM OF PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical enquiries always set about investigating the highest purpose to be attained by man by all those in whom such a wish is implanted. The presumption has been that man is in a state of misery or change and all endeavours must tend to his rising out of it. The possibility of realising that end depends upon a thorough understanding of the causes and the laws governing this undesirable state. Perhaps in despair of an escape from it in any other manner we seem to be hopeful of it by supposing the very condition to be curable. To Sri Madhwa this appears no solution at all and the investigation pointing to such a conclusion appears bootless trouble. On the other hand the experiences of the world are as irrefutable facts as their causes must be. The different conditions of man must therefore be looked upon as different combinations either of causes or effects. If particular combinations have tended to this miserable state an analysis or unravelling of this complex condition restoring the several elements to their original condition or instituting a different set of combinations must tend to a different state. Taking this position we can see that the Being that thirsts after realisation of a better state can

possibly have it and that *that* attainment alone can be the sensible end of man. Accordingly Sri Madhwa sees the fitness of and finds reasons for starting with the proposition that the world is real, and its wise and good Ruler is a Reality of all excellence and powers. Therefore a true understanding of the world and its Author and of their true relations he says gradually leads to the direct cognition of the Lord and His Grace towards the desired Salvation.

CATEGORIES OF THE SYSTEM

Philosophers endeavour to analyse the whole world of things or phenomena into convenient groups for the purposes of understanding and explanation. Kanada divides it into six or seven groups of *things* in the most comprehensive sense and Gotama divides the phenomena in their subjective aspect into sixteen groups for the purpose of testing truths so far as they may be embodied in language the exponent of thought. Other philosophers also have their own divisions. But Sri Madhwa has with reference to the genuine authorities and accurate observation grouped them under these ten heads or categories—1 substance 2 quality 3 action 4 community 5 speciality or particularity 6 the specified Visishta) 7 the whole (Amsi) 8 latent power (Sakti) 9 similarity 10 non existence or (abhava) (*Vide* author's treatise on the categories of Madhwa's system)

Such a classification is apparently necessary for the understanding of the relations how they were brought about how and how far they can be changed or brought to an end. Primarily the scientific process of study is analysis and it starts with our understanding. An idea of *what is not* was not and will not be at any time is yet possible to have and it is necessary in contradistinction

to the idea *what is was or will be* That idea we must admit is called forth by some force of imagination however formless vague and indefinite the representation may be Sometimes it may be called forth by the use of language which has no reference to any fact or object that has a being Without such a vague conception at least of absolute non being there could be no denying it either The Acharyas insight into this feature of understanding must clearly show that the most fundamental principle involved in it is always kept in view At the same time he requires the thinker to remember that facts alone have attraction for him and facts and fancies should never be confounded Secondly the Acharyas thought on the knotty problem of external perception or theory of vision and his deference to the law of causation promise and admit a basis to the human order standing which must stand firm as long as a true conception of knowledge may guide man safely out of the meshes woven by the same faculty when corrupt

MATTER OR PHYSICAL SUBSTANCE

Starting with this principle he tells us that the different properties and characteristics or tendencies of mutually exclusive nature abstractions as they may in themselves be do point to difference in substances gross or subtle wherein they must rest For instance let us take all unintelligent matter to be one kind of substance If that were absolutely homogeneous and every portion of it absolutely like any other portion in all respects it would be difficult consistently to explain the very many and different phenomena The explanation sought to be given by the combination in different proportions or by the differently acting forces working upon it cannot succeed so long as the principle is assumed to be the one absolute substance absolutely homogeneous On the other hand

different principles or even particulars may have such prevailing kindred nature as may be fit to be considered under one class forming a practically homogeneous heap or mass. That is to say, the classification or assortment into one group or class does not necessitate the recognition of a substance in general to be absolutely identical either in quantity or quality, except perhaps by a forced thought or forced expression or by regarding things to be such under peculiar conditions or light under such conditions imagined or instituted by us they might exhibit a similar form of virtue, but this cannot prove that their differentiating virtues are not at all. Hence *prakriti* or nonintelligent matter, (which is the physical matter of the modern or the materialistic science, fit to be weighed or analysed, or treated in over so many ways), which in conjunction with a force or forces may variously fall into combinations of its own constituent principles and according to proportions yield different and useful products is philosophically and logically conceived to be one i.e. one kind of substance, from the ruling common characteristic of *being subject to modification*. When this is thus found to be one distinct nature another by virtue of what the same understanding implies must be admitted as exhibiting a different set of characteristics. The mental and moral phenomena refuse to be resolved into that modifiable ponderous physical substance, for supposing for a moment that they could be so resolved, it would then be the absolute annihilation or denial of the mental and moral nature as having really no casual or germinal existence. The difficulty of taking up such a position being so evident, some have found it easier and more agreeable to hold that all physical matter or phenomena if at all, exist only in idea and might be resolved into idea, which, must however, ultimately stand unrelated. Thus the two views

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are mutually exclusive though both the sides appear to be in actual combination, and hence in observation too

THE THREE ENTITIES

Now the view pronounced by Sri Madhwa, partially recognised by some others also comes in apparently as a conciliation of both but diametrically opposed to either. The physical matter cannot be essentially resolved into the mind or fully accounted for by the mental and moral phenomena while these essentially refuse to be the physical matter or merely its modes or its properties. The relation of related things does not require such unification while it is the full evidence of itself viz the relation between things of different natures each acting and reacting on the other and still capable of being liberated in some measure from such operation wholly or to the desirable extent. The light brought into a dark room becomes the evidence not only of the presence of any dull substance but of its own presence as well. Such cogent considerations lie at the foundation of the system taught by Sri Madhwa. Accordingly, the whole universe presented to his thought divides itself into two main groups viz the *intelligent* and the *unintelligent*. The former furnishes the motive force necessary for the changes or the modifications in the latter and as such it is capable of acting with absolute or limited force with regard to *that* physical matter.

Now the *Supreme Intelligence* of absolutely independent activity is the Supreme Being that unconditioned rules all the rest that is conditioned. Though it is placed logically in the first group it should not be considered as equal to or one with any other particular of that group*.

* Vide Introduction to the translations of Purna Pragasana and Tattva Sankhyana

for the very reason that we have to grant *that* to be the *one absolute* and the others to be limited or finite. In spite of the similarity in respect of being intelligent the recognition of this broad gulf of difference between *that one* and other particulars of the class cannot affect the dignity of philosophical conceptions. From the importance of the Supreme Intelligence the absolute source of force it is separately considered as the independent existence not in itself conditioned but wisely conditioning or limiting other existences. The entities thus recognised in this system are three viz 1 the Independent Intelligence 2 the dependent intelligences 3 the unintelligent. The ten categories already enumerated comprehend these three and their relations*. The Bhagavad Gita directly supports this threefold classification of eternal truths or entities.

THE NATURE OF THE ENTITIES

I The Supreme Intelligence or Brahman is unlimited by time space qualities and powers and hence independent. II The limited intelligences are unlimited in time but limited in all other respects and hence they are wholly dependent upon Brahman who in His infinite wisdom best knows how to guide them and help them in working out their destiny. Now the difference recognised between individuals must lead to its logical consequences. The impulses of moral nature are not essentially the same in all. Otherwise the activities different in various individuals at the same time cannot be satisfactorily explained. The body is guided and used by the indweller and for his use in a particular manner it is made suitable. These impulses or tendencies are being the very essence not to be

* I do Chapter XV and Introduction to the Author's Translation

eradicated and superseded by others; on the other hand, they sovereignly develop to an absolute perfection in the several individuals—a development which determines the final goal of each (Vedā-Gita). These impulses or tendencies are of three kinds as *Sattva*, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*. The *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are three principles constituting *Prakṛiti*, corresponding to those tendencies and becoming the instrument or basis for working out the Soul's nature. They appear to operate different individuals and may be popularly described as good, evil, and good and evil mixed. These cannot be thought of as depending upon any causes or circumstances that have no real or permanent connection with the eternal beings. They cannot be said to arise out of the material bodies with which beings are endowed; on the other hand, the bodies are given suitably to the tendencies in it. Therefore the question cannot but lead us to recognizing that the source of the tendencies is in the essential nature of intelligent being itself.

III. Also, the *unintelligent Matter* is essentially unlimited in time. But it is capable of being modified and cut into pieces and the Acharya states that the ordinary notion of an atom is only crude, and even that atom may, if provided with such subtle means, be divided into still finer parts, perhaps till we come to something like a geometrical point: even such a point has, in his view, aspects when considered relatively to the various lines that may pass through, or drawn to, or from it. He would, therefore, tell us that in the space of an atom there may be infinities of living existences. This entity, regarded as one homogeneous mass of substance, is described, with due regard to the law of causation, as constituted of a number of subtle principles all agreeing in this respect that they are modifiable.

When these principles are taken in different proportions the gross forms of matter in different stages are produced with different virtues or properties according as this or that principle predominates. The combinations are brought about by the will and command of the Supreme Intelligence of course not blind of any purpose. They are produced evidently to serve not any purpose of *that Matter* or the principles constituting it—(hence it is called unintelligent for the intelligent alone can be said to have a purpose) but the purposes to be achieved by the limited intelligence. Various questions affecting the law, progress and the ultimate goal of the life in observation may be consistently answered when a clear and sufficiently deep insight is had into the nature of these three entities even as assumptions for speculation.

One great feature of the aforesaid analysis is the endeavour to emphasise the distinction between the changeable and the unchangeable. It is the former that is the basis of all the phenomena appearing and disappearing and also reappearing having a transitory life against the fond wishes of the intelligent being who apparently is the agent of them all and would have all agreeable phenomena alone perpetuated without a change or interruption. This circumstance has been used in the *Brahma Sutra* to prove the dependent character of the limited intelligence. Thus a grand purpose is read through the changes that are produced to and withdrawn from the view of the *jiva*. When thus the principle of essential distinction is recognised between the entities the Evolution cannot be considered to have any particular value with reference to that Matter alone. Though this matter and the spiritual essence cannot become mixed up into a substance of one nature or of a third nature.

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still Matter does exist only for the uses of the other and hence the states of its gross evolution are intended to contribute to the subtle evolution of the light of understanding in the spiritual being whose essence does not thereby become modified. If then the course of evolution in Matter should depend upon the course that has to be passed through by the spiritual being and if the latter course should be regulated by the peculiarities resting in the *jiva* and consequently the line appointed by the guiding Omiscience the course of Evolution cannot and need not be as perfectly straight and advancing only onwards as we would have it. The principle being to give the spiritual entity all those experiences that may give the development necessary for the attainment and the intelligent and intelligible realisation of the final goal and as it is to be reached severally by those beings the law of Evolution should be taken to work as modified by Karma which necessarily works in a zigzag course.

KNOWLEDGE SENSUOUS AND NON SENSUOUS

The intelligent being must by virtue of its own essence know certain things directly either its own aspects or other objects ever present to it. That is to say it has non sensuous knowledge. When we have called it limited intelligence the non sensuous knowledge it has though very necessary cannot be very considerable nor should the mistake be made that it possesses all the required knowledge either on the other hand it has essentially the faculty to extend within certain limits the sphere of its understanding by the experiences which the conditions are intended to bring about. The non sensuous knowledge is called *sakshi gnana* and the Self constitutes by itself the faculty of *perceiving directly* and hence it is *sakshin*. The words *sakshi* is so explained

by Panini. It is not to be taken to mean one that looks on with indifference or unaffected by what is perceived. By this virtue the individual Self realises all that is conveyed to it by the senses and other organs. Having regard to this source the knowledge so gained is called *Vrittignana* or experiential knowledge. In the case of embodied souls both kinds of knowledge are observed to be. But the former is always true and the latter may or may not be. So when two perceptions arise successively with reference to the same thing the *sakshi* or the soul sits in judgment upon them. The details of non-sensuous knowledge lie dormant in the case of many souls and in fact their attention is more strongly drawn to sensuous presentations. This state of the soul is described as *samsara-bandha* for while in that condition the soul happens to be engrossed with the passing circumstances made sufficiently attractive why in an overpowering degree though not after all without a purpose even therein. That is the *jiva* is in the long run expected to discover how forgetful he has been of his own nature and of the Lord and other things of permanent and absolute interest which he could realise only by contrast and by the disgust and dissatisfaction he must feel and develop towards them.

SAMSARA OR BONDAGE

The bondage or the evident limitation by a body or bodies which appear to be the impediment to such realisation is by some regarded as only seeming or unreal. It is said that the unreal seems to be real through Ignorance against which difficulties have been already raised for they hold that being unreal the bondage can possibly vanish when the veil of Ignorance is raised. But this purposeless unreality at any point or in any manner investing a

boundless unknowable Reality does not commend itself to Sri Madhwa. With the data already described he thinks that the limited intelligences are in real bondage since they are eternal and ever capable of some essential perception desire and activity, which differ in each both in kind and degree and they are therefore naturally invested like unto a seed with an appropriate husk of a *lingasareera* that is a subtle body of *prakriti* which is a reality distinct from the essence of the Intelligent being. When it is said that the bondage is real it does not mean it is the essential nature of the being. That is a view rather necessitated by the starting assumption that there is not one Reality without a second. As already shown the very limited character of the soul's essential nature is sufficient to explain how it becomes subjected to other real conditions useful in working towards a goal of its own. Then the Lord in His perfect wisdom not according to our wisdom agreeable to our desire and wishes institutes those real conditions of bondage. He also raises us from their midst when the evolution of our nature is complete. Thus the responsibility which the moral being must bear is not merely phenomenal but has a firm basis and significance though not generally perceived by us—(vide author's summary of the 18th chapter of the Gita)

KARMA AND KNOWLEDGE

When the essential nature of workers and their conditions are thus conceived to be real it is easy to see that they have to do Karma that is to work so as to gain that knowledge which should engender devotion to and secure the grace of Brahman. Directly from this position it is clearly seen that the prescribed Karma is the means of the required knowledge which in its turn purified and exalted by devotion is the

immediate and most important step towards the goal. Hence knowledge is superior to Karma but both are not antagonistic which might appear to be the case under common confusion of ideas.

The Karma spoken of in the foregoing paragraph is a means to knowledge enjoined upon the worker and as such consists of duties that one should necessarily perform. Again Karma is often spoken of as the cause of the mundane bondage. This Karma literally means what one does i.e. activity in general. All activities not prompted by the wish of delighting the Lord and obtaining His grace do produce some consequence or other and the jivas are bound to abide by it (like the Gita). The Intelligent being is essentially characterised by knowledge or the faculty of knowing, will and self directed activity and as such he cannot at any moment cease to be active. Then it is clear that the direction given in the activity makes it either a source of strengthening the mundane bondage or of knowledge leading to liberation.

GODHEAD

It has been already described as being unlimited in all respects i.e. it is absolute. By some it is held that the Absolute is unknowable, indescribable, destitute of attributes of all peculiarities, is purely impersonal, manifests itself into many by means of conditions. But the Acharya points out that very idea of Absolute is as relative as any other idea relative to the idea of the conditioned and however vague this idea may be it is still knowing the Absolute that is to say the Absolute is not absolutely unknowable, certainly it is unknowable in the sense it is not wholly and exhaustively known and as for that matter this sort of unknowableness is to be admitted with reference to the commonest things claimed to be wholly

within the range of our knowledge. Similarly it is indescribable inasmuch as it is not exhaustively described in language. It is destitute of qualities *ri- Satva Rajas Tanas* but not of the infinite attributes of infinite excellence nor of peculiarities since every idea distinguishing Brahman from other things implies a characteristic of the Absolute.

The statement that Brahman is indescribable etc. however proceeds from the absence of thorough comprehension of Brahman. The wise see the form of (the Mount) Meru and still do not see it (for they cannot see all over in and out). (Similarly) it (Brahman) cannot be described, reasoned out and known (entirely as such and such). So the Garuda Purana says. For want of thorough comprehension Brahman though declared by the whole body of Scriptures and capable of being known and inferred by reasoning is said to be beyond the reach of words reasoning and knowledge. (*Purna Pragna Darsana* page 11)

ABSOLUTE IS NOT UNKNOWABLE

When the eye sees a huge object having colour neither that eye nor the mind acting with it is observed to limit or reduce the dimensions of the object. Similarly to think of Godhead as possessing attributes cannot in any manner limit or reduce it. A small mirror which may bear the image of a much larger object yet representing an unmistakable likeness of the whole does not thereby make the object be of lesser dimensions nor does it require the object to enter into it that it might bear the Image. So when our senses are brought in relation to objects there is no necessity for these to enter into either the senses or the mind though indisputably the perception of objects arises in the mind which has no dimensions. Whether it is the mind a faculty of the material vesture or it is

the intelligent self that perceives the object is not required to enter into them hence it is properly the object. On the same line of reasoning we can see that all the means of knowledge at our command may give us the necessary perception of the Absolute without in any manner interrupting its character. By the way it may also be noted that the Acharya holds that if the Absolute could not be directly prescribed by any word no word could possibly indicate it even by way of suggestion for when it is again questioned what is the thing that is suggested by any word? the answer must finally be given in words which at least must directly describe Him. What is describable is certainly knowable no matter to what extent it may be while the sufficiency of the possible extent is attested by the practical and accomplished.

If all the Vedas do not exhaustively describe Brahman or the Absolute it is described by them all so far as they go. Sri Madhwacharya has shown in his commentary of the first Adhyaya of the *Vedanta Sūtras* and in *Karīṣanūnaya* how all the sentences words syllables and sounds declare the excellence and perfectness of the Absolute. Such Brahman cannot be sensibly supposed to become really or otherwise conditioned by anything else or in any manner.

INCARNATION

The idea of incarnation is one of much abuse and in fact it is incompatible with the nature of the Supreme Being. Whenever He appears as one among His creatures for the purpose of guiding them He seems to them as one in flesh and blood. But under no circumstances He assumes or has¹ the necessity to assume such a body as conditions the little *jīva*. It is not a matter of serious difficulty for reali-

sation that the Lord of unbounded powers can show Himself in such forms as are familiar to men. Sri Madhwa repeatedly points out that *opārita deha* i.e. material body is put on by the Lord. To be conditioned by the material body and to be present in all bodies as the omnipresent Lord are two different things. On the other hand the *jīva* who is imprisoned as it were in the material body might be said to have innumerable incarnations though involuntarily. When the essential and eternal difference is made out between the Lord and the souls the question of incarnation has altogether a different bearing in the teachings of Sri Madhwa. Accordingly all the statements in the Gita are explained in this light and supported by a proper interpretation of the *Rik Purnamīdam* (Br vii 1).

That is whole this is whole from the whole issues the whole the whole being taken away from the whole (*still*) the whole remains. Thus the unconditioned nature of Brahman is declared whether He is the whole pervading all space and time or appears to us in a human form or actuates us enthroned in our hearts.

If the term Impersonal means of unlimited nature in all respects Brahman is Impersonal. He is also personal for He is not a mere lifeless abstraction nor a formless mass of some substance. True His infinite Personality we cannot even conceive. But by virtue of His unbounded powers and out of His pure grace towards us He may show Himself as a finite Personality but He does not on that account become finite in any respect.

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True His infinite Personality we cannot even conceive But by virtue of His unbounded powers and not of His pure grace towards us He may show Himself as a finite Personality but He does not on that account become finite in any respect or degree (ide Purusha Sokta and Vedanta Sutras III n 23 to 27) Even when He so appears He does not assume material bodies though we are dull enough to mistake His Personality as finite or as consisting of flesh and blood to which alone our eyes are habituated He is essentially all knowledge all bliss So the Highest Brahman is directly the Iswara unbounded or unveiled by Maya the Ruler of the world and all It is He who agitates the unintelligent matter causes the subtle constituent principles thereof to combine in various proportions and to produce various gross effects which become the conditions with which the souls have to work towards their destiny Since *jivas* must work and the products of matter must furnish them with conditions under the guidance of the Lord this gross perceptible universe is seen to develop from the subtle principles of the unintelligent matter when worked up by the guiding activity of the Lord and the necessary activity of *jivas*

THE MEANS OF SALVATION

When thus the nature of Brahman and of the limited Intelligent being is truly perceived and when there is a necessity felt on the part of the latter for working towards a high purpose viz that of realising as fully as possible their own nature and that of the Lord and thereby attaining to a state of blessedness emerging from a life of sleepy dullness and darkness the *jivas* naturally look for the means of attainment which is called *sadhana* The subject is clearly treated of in the third Adhyaya of the Purna Pragna Darshan and its introduction To state briefly renunciation devotion

direct cognition of the Lord by contemplation are the only means leading to *mukti*. A correct knowledge of all things gross and subtle by enquiry and the qualification of intrinsic devotion lead to that course of contemplation.

An inborn devotion to the Lord, a just study of the Vedas, control of the senses, the eschewing of pleasures, indifference to hope and fears, the perception of the futility and the perishable character of all things below, a thorough resignation to the feet of the Lord are the first qualifications of those that are enabled to work towards direct cognition. The knowledge to be gained by enquiry must have prominently reference to these points — (1) The five relations of ineffaceable difference (a) The Lord is distinct from the limited intelligence (b) The Lord is distinct from the unintelligent matter (c) One *jiva* is distinct from another (d) *Jivas* are distinct from Matter (e) When Matter is divided the pieces are distinct from one another (2) The graduated rank of all the finite beings (3) The conclusive perception, by ascending up the ladder of gradation of the Supreme Being as one far far above and as the Independent and Gracious Ruler of these all.

INELIGIBLE JIVAS

Besides the recognition of entities more than one and the aforesaid gradation there is a third article of faith which fills thinkers with an qualified horror. It is the question of eternal damnation or of some *jivas* being ineligible for the blissful state in salvation. This point really requires a separate treatise for elucidation since it is a view opposed to the sentimental world or to systems dignified as only gratifying that sentiment and the Acharyas view has been represented as having originated in his own sentiment. However the general reader may for a moment see the

justification of the view by thinking that all the evil tendencies and the mixed tendencies of good and evil are respectively condemned to suffer eternal damnation or to be ever tossed only in the mundane life. If these tendencies should ever be perceived and happen to be as some concrete individuals of immutable character no better destiny could then await them. Taking such a view Sri Madhwa classifies into three groups the *jivas* who are such concrete intelligent and yet immutable tendencies for in the Acharya's system there is no abstract attribute standing apart from some substance or substratum implied by the notion no substance destitute of some attribute and there is nothing more perceived of the substance than the group of attributes presented to the understanding (*vide* Sadha under Vedanta Sutras III ii 28). But the *Jiva* of each class works with his own appropriate conditions and becomes developed to ripeness in his own tendency and thus reaches the destiny to be realised by virtue of his essential nature.

THE FINAL STATE

When the *jivas* attain *mukti* they do not and need not become one with the Lord not equal to Him or to one another among themselves—which was not before for the perfection attained by each *jiva* is only his own which does not savour of any sense of dissatisfaction or jealousy—a point elucidated by Sri Badarayana in the Sutra (III ii 31)

SATIA

But the gradation (inequality) among the released does not become the cause of variance (jealousy etc.) between them because they have their mind set on (Brahman) the Imperishable and are all equal (in being free from defects) and (the inferiors) are indebted to the superiors as the pupil (is to the master)

BHASHYA

' From the absence of equality betwixt the released (in heaven) variance (jealousy etc) does not arise between them for all have attained to the direct knowledge of Brahman and are free from defects or shortcomings in which respect they are equal and there is the grace of the superiors to which the souls of lower grades are indebted This may be illustrated by the case of the pupil who has betaken himself to the preceptor (that leads him to Brahman) All this is said in the Tura Sruti The classes of souls in the world of bliss are various and of various grades But they are not at variance (with each other) for they all know Brahman and are free from faults even in the world (mere) inequality of rank does not become the cause of variance (discontent etc) as (observed) in the relation of the master and the pupil etc then whence could there be any cause of difference among those that have after release attained to real wisdom?

The *gatas* having within their appropriate limits endeavoured and attained a direct perception of the Lord and His Grace enter into the state of heavenly bliss generally along with *Chaturmukha* who is the final Preceptor of all The heavenly state is not a mere absence or forgetfulness of misery but it is a state of positive intelligible blissfulness for their own pure spiritual nature and the presence of the blissful Lord ever enjoyed in unfading freshness can really make them blessed through eternity

THE CHIEF IDEAS RECAPITULATED

From the foregoing meagre sketch it may be seen that (1) to this system a special significance is attached to *Purushartha* the chief good which the Intelligent being thirsts after to attain (2) the means with which we are endowd and are working are not naturally discredited (3) that

everything concrete or abstract proved to be truth or proved inherent in the truth has a real value and purpose (4) that Knowledge essential and experiential are both useful attributes of the limited Intelligent being (5) that the senses in their normal and sound condition and the Eteral Testimony consistently interpreted are the sources of all reliable knowledge (6) that the limitations of knowledge in the finite *jiva* is no impediment to obtaining a true perception of the absolute to the necessary extent (7) that the attributes of the Absolute are as absolute as itself and are essentially the same so as not to become its limitations in any manner (8) that difference or distinctness is a characteristic of everything since anything that is perceived is perceived to be distinct from everything either generally or specially (9) that the property of *Particularity* enables us to abstract the various aspects of one and the same thing and to speak of them as separate things while the identity of the thing is not interfered with (10) that on the strength of the only reliable evidence vouchsafed to us absolute identity of all that appear different ceases to be acceptable (11) that the three kinds of entities are the least to which all the phenomena can possibly be reduced and they cannot be fewer to afford a consistent explanation and (12) that the philosophical dignity of oneness of all is questioned on the strength of evidence as tested by logic and in spite of various analogies and grand scientific enquires that oneness hoped for in the end would only stand in inexplicable destitution of purpose either in the beginning or at the conclusion Only such of the points have been touched upon as are necessary for the general reader to have a clear idea of the distinctive character of Sri Madhwa's philosophical views

More than any other the one feature that been brought out is Sri Madhva's contention that the validity of sense experience cannot be tot. impeached and the Srotis cannot be interpreted contradicting either that experience or psychological law that no transcendental position contradicting them can be admissible. This realistic view of the phenomenal world as well of its positive causes expressed in the Rigv (vide Mandalas II to VII) and the condemnation of the opposite view in the Bhagavad Gita (ch. xvi 8 &c) afford an enormous strength to psychological data. He tells us that in particulars of a class the points of commonness are not identical with those in another; they are only two sets like each other, points of difference equally from the essence of each individual and thus the full contents of a particular comprise both the points of commonness and those of difference. If these are real, reason can be seen why these alone should be thought unreal. Both being equally essential as the essence of the thing, he cannot see where difference in the essential nature between one and another could become the source of increase or defect.

The cause of misery must be found in the peculiarities of each *jiva* or in some circumstances such as passions all colouring in some ignorant or misapprehension which cannot with propriety be supposed to limit the Universal Intelligence from which on the other hand limited intelligence cannot without help rise to the realisation of a better and ever blessed state. Accordingly the *Sutakara* has shown how gradation or difference does not in any manner mar the sense of perfect blessedness at the end in the heavenly kingdom. Similarly the *gunas* known as *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are those t

eschewed, but not the qualities, *i.e.*, the properties) of wisdom nobility, power and such excellent and essential attributes which make the individual, for these cannot go at all. This is absolutely true of the Lord whom the *gunas* of *rakriti* could never assail. In fine the theory of Sri Madhwa comes forward to exhibit the truth on the basis that the causes of our moral aspirations are absolutely real, those conscious aspirations are equally real, and the realisation of those aspirations must be and is a gloriously absolute and conscious reality—a position which one who thinks confers true dignity on a philosophical view.